

Moving: A Meditation

By Marisa Olson

The soundtrack for Marc Horowitz's "[Moving](#)" dilates like the heartbeat of a thrilling horror movie's score. It's the perfect entree to a video-performance embodying that paramount life stressor: Moving

The performance was commissioned to observe the relocation of Aran Cravey Gallery into bigger Hollywood digs, and it took place behind the locked doors of Cravey's original storefront space along Abbot Kinney Boulevard, where shoppers and befuddled tourists could only stop to peer-in at the 72-hour spectacle within. From their perspective, Moving might have looked like many of Horowitz's previous works: part performance, part installation, part hyper-documented film-shoot, and major part what-the-fuck?!

As evident in the resultant video, Horowitz and a collaborator don crafty pink costumes and not-quite tirelessly but certainly enthusiastically chip away at a medium-range cement monolith erected in the gallery precisely for the purposes of this two-man closing party demo.

It is important to establish right away that Moving's monolith is not a monolith in the Washington Monument or Trajan's Column way. It is every bit a monolith in the 2001: A Space Odyssey way. It is a mysterious and at first seemingly randomly-appearing architectural construction later revealing itself to exist not only as a narrative propellant but also as a sort of sundial for technological and resulting cultural "evolution." --Shifts in time, space, and social relations that for the purposes of this meditation we are going to equate with Aran Cravey's desire to move from one part of Los Angeles to another in order to differently participate in the experiment that is LA while supporting experimental artists.

That said, if Horowitz's doomed-to-be-defiled tower resembles anything it's a vertically-challenged support structure propping up nothing more than the performance itself, the sort of steering wheel around which the Moving tilt-a-whirl spins.

Like so many great works of art, I just want to touch it, to puncture the real and perceived screens between my body and the object in the video. I don't just want to break down the fourth wall between myself and the work--Horowitz has pretty well done that for me with his well-worn pickaxe--I want to smell and huff that dust, rub the chalk between my fingers, marvel at its perfect cheat codery as a supposedly-impenetrable yet entirely made-for-tv and even Hollywood-petite column. I want to stand next to it and see if the real thing is as hyperreally stunning a marriage of American Southwest plateau sediment and Cake Wars-style berry ganache as it appears to be in Vimeo HD.

I also just want to get into that room, goddammit. That's what Marc Horowitz does to people. I've seen him do it for over a decade. Even in an era when the act of celebrities living out their love lives for millions to see on social media and reality television (a genre in which even Horowitz has dabbled) has led viewers to believe in the ability of media to forge personal connections across vast telematic distances, Horowitz has a way of making those around him feel as if no technology can bring them close enough to him.

His is a special blend of innate charisma, mediagenic installation skills, and damn good ideas. Like a good con man, he draws his interlocutors (in that case, that would be you: the viewer) closer and closer, eager to hear more, and serving-up projects that cut to the heart of the interpersonal issues with which so many of us identify in an increasingly alienating, media-saturated, power-hungry art world. He's the man

in uniform, fighting that fire with fire of his own--throwing shade at estranged digital labor and personal conversations reduced to text messages (as he does in *Moving*), even as he thumbs down on that proverbial fire extinguisher with a sort of Miley Cyrus'esque foam finger.

At one point in the video, the characters break out of a hug and into rom-com dialogue. "Just tell me what you are seeing," fuzzy paint-roller man asks of his pointy-headed, installation-foam friend as he peers through a point-and-shoot viewfinder. "Does it look like I'm posing for a J.Crew catalogue?"

Boom! In one simple question Horowitz has managed to paint the factorial vortex at the center of his practice. Horowitz's exploitation of mass media to initiate interpersonal social sculpture once entailed choreographing a National Dinner Tour by writing his phone number and the note "Dinner with Marc" on the white board inside a Crate & Barrel computer hutch while he was on a photo assistant gig. The stunt landed him a string of major talk show dates and inclusion in *People Magazine's* 50 Hottest Bachelor's list, where he was deemed a "Reality Hacker."

Moving takes place at an especially interstitial moment in the discourse of contemporary art, with regard to the nexus between dematerialization and rematerialization. --Between a rock and a hard place, the cheeky might say with regard to his chipping away! Like many postinternet artists, Horowitz does not need a regular studio to maintain a "studio practice," and again, as evident in the postproduction-heavy component of the video, so much of the work registers in the mix as signifying layers, not unlike the material layers of the column, are culled together in a post-network-conscious way to form a web of meaning comprised of sonic tropes, color filter iconography, and pang-inducing voiceover nostalgia. The invitation of a gallery to mark a spatial transition (an upgrade in both parties' careers, really) almost adds another layer to the wedding cake that unites post-studio practice and the endurance spectacle of beating the shit out of a constitutionally pointless construction.

Ironically, the wedding present here is that this rock/hard place turns out to be geocached on the treasure-map that is the post-dematerialized art scene. (Have we planted enough "post-'s" here?) The space turns out to be white-hot igneous. Nearly fluid. And Horowitz turns out to be less Sisyphus, more the Mayor of Sybaris. --Less the doomed one who repeatedly pushes the rock up the hill, only to see it tumble back down every day; more surveyor of the fertile port synonymous with hedonism, now covered in rocky sediment.

Horowitz gives us the sullen present and the promise of a fantastical future at the same time.

At some point toward the end of the process, Horowitz paused to do what we all must do when we finish a move: dust up behind ourselves. With any hope, some day what happened next will make it to his career-retrospective Director's Cut. Whether to memorialize an uncanny moment, take a breather, or acknowledge the furry pink elephant in the room, Horowitz--covered in chalk, concrete, and glittery residue--stopped everything (in classic Horowitz-style) to shoot an improvised faux commercial within a commercial, wherein he promotes his services as a superbutch, fluffy white duster-bearing cleaning man who will "knock your dust the fuck out!"