

whereabouts

Cudelice Brazelton IV • K.R.M. Mooney • Bat-Ami Rivlin

Curated by Dominika Tylcz

“What is it about?” is a question that too often guides interpretation of artworks that don’t offer many interpretive hints. In an attempt to determine the work’s topic – its ‘aboutness’ – this question tends to form links to larger narratives beyond the work itself. *whereabouts* posit that a work of art can resist such connections with theoretical discourses and instead forge ties with its environment.

The exhibition stages a close dialogue between sculptures by Cudelice Brazelton IV, K.R.M Mooney, and Bat-Ami Rivlin, encouraging a more direct and intuitive approach to beholding art. Here, the “aboutness” is replaced by “aroundness”: a mode of meaning produced through spatial and material involvement with the work’s surroundings, including the viewer. Being “around” implies a different relation between meaning and artwork, one of enmeshment, proximity, and encounter. While aboutness favors narrative and theoretical frameworks, aroundness points towards spatial and material connections between the work and its surroundings. The included artworks investigate the evocative potential of the sculptural materials by drawing attention to their infrastructural environment. They do so by foregrounding their relationships with the viewer and the architecture of the exhibition space, and in the process revealing their mutability.

Most spatial and motoric information a person collects from their environment is filtered out by the brain and pushed into a preattentive, nonverbal layer, which one can access as necessary. The works presented in *whereabouts* tap into this undercurrent of information processing; they utilize reflexes, conditioned behaviors and guided perception to elicit an intuitive response from the viewer. As the sculptures take cues from the environment, they also establish open- to-chance encounters and form transitory networks. As a result the surroundings become as much a part of the work as the materials themselves. In dialogue with the site and its audience, Brazelton IV, Mooney, and Rivlin explore the embedded but inactive utility of objects as a vehicle towards a more automatic, embodied relationship with the audience. *whereabouts* invites us to look for meaning in these spatio-material moments by de-centering calculated and explanatory approaches.

about and around

The prepositions “about” and “around” indicate different relations between nouns and verbs, and by extension, things and actions. The difference between the two also discloses deeper running assumptions about how reality is organized in the mind.

“About” describes a pointed, direct relationship between two distinct concepts or objects, while “around” marks a range of space – literal or figurative – that is encompassed by the action. *To talk about* something implies a certain specificity, a link between the spoken matter and the verb. In contrast, *to talk around* something indicates a more vague area of relevance, with no distinct main theme. In some cases, the two modes coincide, suggesting that “aboutness” can also function in a spatial sense. In phrases such as *to walk about*, *whereabouts*, and *roundabout*, this aspect is foregrounded.

When seen as signifying strategies, these two modes have wider ramifications: aroundness favors horizontality and being together, while aboutness links diverse elements in a more vertical or hierarchical manner. Being “around” implies an embracing relation of proximity, a tangential point of encounter, lingering on the boundary between two different things – being adjacent to, neighboring with, or engulfing a whole. By contrast, “about” presupposes a different kind of relationship between two entities: one of implication and causality, a function of adhering to a narrative or a conceptual framework. It’s a means of connecting the specific with the general, which can sometimes force partial reduction, for it singles out the subject or main theme of the text and downplays inessential threads. Conversely, aroundness weaves things together as a part of the same, diverse cluster, creating an environment for very diverse elements. It is a mode of proximity that avoids reduction and creates open-ended environments.

Cudelice Brazelton IV

With a Crooked Stance, 2021

Acrylic, metal, clay, inkjet print, steel rod, wire, nails, magnets

Brazelton often composes assemblages from found quotidian and industrial objects, creating non-linear, obscure works that lure the viewer in with a promise of interaction. In this work, two magnets are placed on the top and bottom of a steel rod, forcing the entire sculpture into a state of constant precarity. The entangled wires extend this unsteady and highly responsive condition to the space around the piece, implicating the viewer's movement in the field of tension circumscribed by the unruly coils. A strip of black inkjet print, glued to a metal sheet, bends in an arch, caught between the magnetic forces, clumsily covering the work's skeleton. The surface image reveals and occludes, while the wobbly composition intercepts and hinders.

K.R.M Mooney,

Joan Green, Bimetal IV, 2017

Steel, linear fluorescent light bulb, polyurethane, vinyl, ceramic heater, silver

In this sculpture, various systems of infrastructure coincide to compose a poetic, open-ended hybrid. As functional objects, the divergent parts of the work – steel conduit, electrical tape, a light tube – suggest distinct modes of engagement, pointing to a specific use and place. Utility, often implying a particular body part, is left afloat, susceptible to poetic impulse. A silver cast of a lavender flower adds another imaginative dimension: the detail oscillates between evocation of the plant's intense fragrance, and the artificiality of its metallic, ornamental reproduction. As the sculpture draws out affinities between the gallery infrastructure and its own hybrid composition, the space becomes activated and filled with affective memories as if with scent.

Bat-Ami Rivlin

Untitled (LED, cord, duct tape), 2021

LED circular lightbulb, extension cord,
duct tape, ballast, converter

As the extension cord is plugged into the outlet, it blurs the boundary between the framing gallery space and the work itself. The meandering cable, while itself a frequent part of the installation process of new media artworks, lies in a disorderly tangle on the floor. The glowing ring doesn't illuminate anything but ground, and the maladroit light seeps through the tape, which only cements the purposeless arrangement of the cord. The tape, cut in strips, embraces various surfaces, tracing their shape and sometimes sticking to itself in accidental knots.

K.R.M. Mooney,

Eutectic c. (i), 2020

Specialized jewelers vise, mount, insulation, cast mistletoe
and cuttlebone, silver, steel, bronze

Jewelry and metalsmith tools come together in this work, indicating the technical and chemical processes they're designed to participate in. The title *Eutectic* refers to soldering, a process in which two metals are melted and joined together, while heat and air acting as facilitators. The piece is designed to inhabit interstitial positions: attached to a doorway, it calls attention to the threshold between spaces, emphasizing architectural cues that create choreography and points of access. The skillfully sculpted leaf of mistletoe and cast of a cuttlebone are affixed to a ring held by the jewelry vise, suggesting force and a laborious fabrication process. Placed significantly below the eye level, *Eutectic c. (i)* accentuates a vertical orientation, addressing the bodies of viewers passing by.

Bat-Ami Rivlin

Untitled (orange net, zip ties), 2021

Debris safety netting, cable ties

The orange net is a safety measure meant to prevent construction debris from falling onto workers or passersby. Tied together in rhythmic folds by zip ties and laid on the floor, the netting appears devoid of the volume it was designed to envelop. The net's size delineates the contours of the room, prompting circumambulatory movement around the work. Both the safety netting and zip ties are the simplest kinds of tools, designed to supplement other activities and objects. In this encounter, nothing productive occurs: utility is exhausted and mismatched.

Cudelice Brazelton IV

Nub, 2021

Control button

The remote control button invokes the mundane activity of skipping TV channels, bringing this mindless yet bodily memory to the surface and inviting the viewer to press the piece. The witty caption "OK" implies a need for permission to initiate an operation, which expands the boundaries of the piece and co-opts the nearby objects and activities, rendering them parts of this hypothetical action. The work relies on the neighboring elements of infrastructure, which it appropriates and in this way expands its limits in an interplay with the viewer's expectations.

Cudelice Brazelton IV (b. 1991) lives and works in Frankfurt, Germany. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Madison, ME, and studied at the Städelschule, Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Frankfurt am Main. Selected solo and duo exhibitions include *A Curve of Many*, Murmurs, Los Angeles (2022); *Starter Kit*, Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin (2021); *Bronzed from Silver*, Sans titre (2016), Paris (2021); *Recoil* (with Dozie Kanu), International Waters, New York (2020); *Violent Groom*, Wschód, Warsaw (2020); and *Prune* (with Nicholas Grafia), Shoot the Lobster, New York (2019). Brazelton's work has been featured in group exhibitions at Swiss Institute, New York (2022); Kristina Kite Gallery, Los Angeles (2021); Kunstverein Wiesbaden, Germany (2021); Lodos Gallery, Mexico City (2020); Murmurs, Los Angeles (2020); Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago (2018); and SculptureCenter, New York (2018).

K.R.M. Mooney (b. 1990) received his B.A. at Central Saint Martins, London, and B.F.A. at California College of the Arts, San Francisco. Mooney's work has been featured in solo exhibitions as part of the SECA Art Awards at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2017); *Pied-à-terre*, Ottsville, PA (2015); and Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco (2015). His work has been included in group exhibitions at Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (2021); Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2021); Sculpture Center, New York (2020); Stadtgalerie Bern, Switzerland (2021); Kunst-Werke, Berlin (2017); White Flag Project Library, St. Louis, MA (2016); FUTURA Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague, (2016); Altman Siegel Gallery, San Francisco (2016); and Hester, New York (2015).

Bat-Ami Rivlin (b. 1991) holds an M.F.A. from Columbia University School of the Arts, New York, and a B.F.A. from the School of Visual Arts, New York. Recent solo and duo exhibitions include *No Can Do*, M 2 3, New York (2021); *Untitled (inflatable house, zip ties, blower)*, A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn, New York (2021); a two-person presentation at Sharp Projects, Copenhagen, Denmark (2021); and *All Trembles*, NARS Foundation, Brooklyn, New York (2019). Rivlin's work has been included in group exhibitions at Public Swim, New York (2020); New York Live Arts, New York (2020); PS122 Gallery, New York (2020); Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami (2019); and Jewish Museum, New York (2019). Her work has been featured in publications such as ArtForum, BOMB Magazine, Brooklyn Rail, and Flash Art, among others.