

Shannon Finnegan

*Slower*

07.05.–17.06.2022

*Slower* is a show about pacing. Shannon Finnegan's work often furnishes the conditions to spend time with others' artwork. However pronounced their commentaries on infrastructure, Finnegan's benches and seating, in particular, make time. They collect acts of rest into a performative group utterance of assent: "Rest here if you agree."

The invitation may partake in a loose tradition of art historical contractualism, among any number of ways "participation" has been solicited. Beyond that, though, it's also cross-disability culture extending itself to those who may not (yet, or ever) allow themselves to identify as disabled, but who might still acknowledge how good it feels to rest, as a feeling they might share with others.

The commonness of that feeling -- implied by the very provision of a seat, and named by the text painted on it -- marks access as a place to get together, whether or not you arrive at the same time. In this way, Finnegan's benches inside the gallery share an impulse with another series of projects, *Anti-Stairs Club Lounge*, which refuses to enter an inaccessible structure, instead outfitting a space to remain outside, waiting or boycotting in the present or implied company of others.

Audio description makes time, too. Not merely offering access *to* visual media, but rather making access *with*, the relay of description allows perception itself to appear, in all its sociability and variation, like a .jpg slowly rendering. Description requires what it extends: time to think, receive, transmit, absorb. In this case, what is relayed is not just visual: "access to the recent history of the gallery," in Shannon's words. Shannon asked Deborah to describe previous exhibitions, in part to get to know Deborah, the other artworks, and this place they've never been. It was also a way to get Deborah to slow down, and to "build a group show without having to bring objects back into the space."

A solo show is an interesting problem, in this context. All of these works are fundamentally dependent on other people's artworks that they appear to be in service of. The benches and audio description, in particular, rely for their function and rationale upon the presence of other works, to which they offer neither a frame, nor a commentary, but rather an altered temporality.

It's tricky, then, to exhibit these works "by themselves," instead of as support for and supported by a group. At a gallery, too, sitting feels different than it does at a museum or other aspirationally public institution. You often arrive and leave under the eye of the front desk, with the shifty feeling of entering a small store where things are for sale, but not to you.

There's a particular kind of standing engendered in this environment, a kind of rushed performance of contemplation, as if to politely nod at the exhibition. There's no extended, anonymous wandering of institutional corridors, no neglected zones to spread out in, no cafeteria or coffee shop. In other words, there's no pacing, no intervals. Is it the bench that gives the artwork time to unfold, or is the artwork also perhaps grounds to decelerate, sit down a bit longer? It's difficult to rest in public without something to prop your mind on.

Here, however, the only visual objects to consider are the day clocks, which move so slowly that it's hard to tell if they're working at all. The manufacturer's website, Finnegan notes, markets day clocks as novelty gifts for retirees and beach homes, but also as access tools for those with memory loss. Finnegan first saw a clock like this at a friend's parents' house and found themselves immediately drawn to it, with a kind of recognition, as a stray amulet of disability culture. They bought one and lived with it during the onset of the pandemic. Sometimes, to check if it was still running, they would have to leave the room and come back later. "What are the objects of disability culture?" Finnegan asks. I think of Carolyn Lazard's *Extended Stay* (2019), a small monitor showing live cable tv, mounted on a metal arm, of the kind found in hospital rooms. What are the textures and experiences of disability, shared across spaces and times that are often forcibly separated from one another?

The day clocks, in this way, recall Deborah's descriptions of artwork that isn't up right now, for people who were not able to be there in person. There's a well-worn paradox by which disabled people, the world's "largest minority," are nonetheless perhaps its most structurally isolated, separated, and exceptionalized; and this despite the fact that almost nothing feels better than being inside a large crowd of disabled people. Crip time happens at the tempo and variable syncopation of actual bodyminds in the process of assembling. But it is also the long delay, the doppler effect of missing each other, and getting together outside of time, even if it's one at a time. My student Dani Halvorson is working on a project about letter-writing, with its descriptions of space-times in which we both are and are not together, as a crip practice; my friend Julie Tolentino talks about saving voicemail cassettes with messages from friends who have passed away. *Slower* is a show about pacing, which is to say it's about intervals -- these may be intervals of perception, or rest, but they're also the intervals by which we overlap even when we don't appear to be there together.

- Amalle Dublon