

# Bonny Paen Conditions

Alli Melanson

Make your home in Me, as I make mine in You

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“Instead of raw or achieved silence, one finds various moves in the direction of an ever-receding horizon of silence — moves which, by definition, can’t ever be fully consummated.”

—Susan Sontag, *The Aesthetics of Silence*

## *Twinning Desires*

The towers are containers for a defunct technology—compact discs—and someone’s presumably discarded music collection. Designed to exhibit the owner’s taste, their open shelves are invitations to be read. A CD is a vessel for vibration: a musical interjection to disrupt the day’s homogenous rhythm, and here their absence begets silence.

She has used a stand-in for herself (Arlen). I have used her work (*Que soy era immaculada concepciou*, 2023) as a stand-in for my work (*Bad weather, flat tires, failed engines, missed connections, traffic jam, and road closures*, 2024). In other times, I have circled around the concept of similarity as the crux of romance. (*Beautiful Balance*, 2016) “We are very similar.” “A slave?”

Among others, Alli has alluded to Sherrie Levine’s *Newborn*, and I think of Anne Truitt and Hannah Wilke at Alex Zachary—particularly with Lauren giving her talk on Ana Mendieta and mimesis on Saturday. She will sit on one side of the line, with the audience on the other. Jacob mentioned Goya’s *The Third of May 1808*, drawing a parallel to the hushed line of figures awaiting their fate. Simon says Rodchenko’s *Workers’ Club*, spilling moves and countermoves.

## *Spiritual Vertigo*

Logistics arose as a military art: a best-practice for winning and staying alive.

We both understand this: the artist and her gallerist.

The unseen work of this work comprises hunting, running, collecting: each stage of the logistical sequence is a negotiation. Alli set out to find twenty matching CD towers from a specific era that belies our age. Each conversation produced a journey that included points of haggling; arranging of transport to and from; hauling down and up flights of stairs; mountains of favours (she doesn’t drive); riding in others’ cars between homes, between cities.

As an apartment-gallery (or apartment-gym, the other business that occupies this space), opening hours require an enormous task of logistics; of moving things around. Serenity

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would be to have nothing, and therefore, nothing to be moved.

For Alli's show, *Blush!*, at 100 Bell Towers, she and Justin carried an industrial beverage fridge up to the third floor space, marking the strenuous upward trajectory with red carbon transfers. This is a drama of the toil: an enunciation of the labour of the protagonist; an insistence on embodied servitude and devotion to the work of art, and to a faith in higher systems.

## *Divine Wine*

Wine is the subject of Jesus' first miracle. This motley band of objects whose original function and place in households is now lost, are similarly bestowed with a new and sacred value. Alli has painted the tops of each tower a deep red; burgundy. The undertone is magenta, which she explains is a colour that does not exist. An imaginary view from above reveals the towers in a cross-like formation: from here (the eye of angels, God, a penthouse dweller, or a drone), only the surface of the red tops swim into focus.

## *A Tower is a Tower is a Tower*

Inside the space, the towers mimic the outside. The gallery's surrounding glass and concrete giants monotonously devour the city's history and dwarf the previously imposing religious structures (2 churches) across the street. As the city self-cannibalizes, we, its inhabitants, dot the terrain like ignored agents of its metabolism.

The towers allude to the residence: of those who used to own them; of the domestic milieu of the gallerist, who resides among the sculpture, and must make her way daily around and through them to navigate 'home.' This detour becomes a choreography. Some days, the towers are picked up and set aside, finding unforeseen, spontaneous formations. The gallerist imagines herself a general before her army and silently commands them.

Following a subdued logic, we make a line, a cross, a grid.

– Bonny Poon

Alli Melanson

Untitled 1-20, 2024

CD Tower, Deluxe X-Pert Interior Water-borne Alkyd Paint Semi-Gloss in 'Divine Wine.'

Variable dimensions.

Alli Melanson lives and works in Montreal. Solo exhibitions include 100 Bell Towers, Montreal (2023); and Chris Andrews, Montreal (2023). Recent group exhibitions include Weatherproof, Chicago (2024); Cherry Hill, Cologne (2023); Chris Andrews, Toronto (2023), and Franz Kaka, Toronto (2023).