

You—country lout—trying to step into tights.
Juggle words—as balls—about feelings—impressions—
such you have—no art!
No rhythm—curves—science—conviction—background—tradition!
Where your circus?
Where do you stand?
What do your words mean?
Never to point—what point?
There is none—carry no meaning—aimed at blank!

- The Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, *The Little Review* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1921)

How does one approach an art practice that is not precipitated by various binaries? A practice whose mere existence complicates its dominant neutered doppelgänger? Perhaps one way to start is by exploring alternative historical precedents—those previously hidden away—which is why we began looking at the work of The Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven.

While eventually rejected by her Dadaist peers, the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, a German bohemian who fled to America, singularly undermined the cool logic of the ready-made by intervening with found objects through personal actions of deformation, defacement, or defamation—carving out possibilities for individual action in a materialist world. While her more famous, male counterparts merely attempted to expose convention, she lived and practiced its antithesis thereby laying bare the very limits they were trying to overcome.

Like the work of Freytag-Loringhoven, the contemporary practices presented in this exhibition reveal a direct relationship and sensitive perception to the unfolding possibilities of found objects. Casually antagonistic and intrapersonal, they activate change instead of waiting for explanation. Be it the textiles of Matt Damhave and Marie Karlberg, the glamorous preserved decay of Amy Yao's assemblages, the weathered receipts of Jason Loeb's, or the hanging event threads by Alison Knowles, the works avoid immediate visual clarity, instead inviting allegorical and actual connections. Here the index of association and particularity is not cloaked in a sleek veneer but floats visibly upon playful surfaces.

These surfaces are at times difficult, as in the seductive yet impossible appropriated ceramic forms of Carissa Rodriguez, and at others whimsical, as with Kathleen Ryan's dramatic enlargement of discarded eyeglasses and post-feast detritus wine fountain. Whether Liz Craft's toothy, smiling, greedy ceramic tile or K8 Hardy's suggestions of a diehard future-forward existence, each piece

transcends their individual elements to create a new language and relationship with the world. In this resistance to the cycle of conformity, *Artificial Complexion* reveals the continued pertinence of personal interventions with and against found objects.

In addition to the above works, Sarah Rara, Luke Fischbeck, and John Tain will curate a rotating selection of rarely heard historical Dada and Fluxus pieces and complementary contemporary audio works for the VSF sound corridor.

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