

Jason:

So you got the boxes. You got them today.

Justin:

I got them yesterday after work. They're noisy. Some of them have little moving parts.

Harley:

Rattly.

Justin:

I was worried that maybe I broke something in them, but I think they're just moving all the time.

Jason:

There's one that's definitely moving, yeah.

Harley:

And you don't know what's in them.

Justin:

My partner Gabriela was looking at them last night and trying to look in the gap you created for light to get in, but I was like, don't tell me what it is. I don't want to know. I can't know, or else it'll ruin everything. I kept thinking the way that you use the paint is really interesting, because you said it was leftover paint you found or something.

Jason:

I was gonna buy paint. I was looking at swatches and sending pictures to Harley. I was outside

the paint store and decided to walk around the building, and I just found all these buckets of paint, and one of them was the exact color Harley had just circled on the photo I sent.

Justin:

That's nice. It seems like that process of finding the paint is related to the whole thing, as this relinquishing-control mechanism over the action upon the objects or something.

Harley:

When he painted the planes first, I think it was a cool move, because then I cut them out of each board and mixed the pieces up from there. It wasn't that we painted the surfaces after the boxes were constructed: they were constructed out of the painted surfaces. So there was also an element of chance in that. Each board yielded exactly two versions of each one — a smaller one and a wider-shaped one. It's really hard to be truly random with it. Does this look like a flag? Should I move this board? So I was just trying to distribute all the colors into the box.

Justin:

And the box organization doesn't seem really affected by the paint. There are some where the back of the box is painted, right?

Harley:

Yeah.

Justin:

That seems to have a pretty cool, dynamic relationship to how you might approach it from all the different positions. From your position, from my position, and as a viewer too. There's this moving relationship when I'm deciding where the viewing apparatus will pop up or whatever. That's not fixed. There's no fixed position in any of this process, which is cool.

Jason:

I think in making them, that's kind of how it was too. You make them, there's not a gravity line or horizon. Harley actually constructed them all, but before we sealed them, one face was off. I came when we put the objects inside and sealed them. That part felt like the object was just floating and rotating in space. The only thing is that there's a light slit, right? But that's not the top or bottom necessarily, it's just where the light comes in. Making a box, you end up flipping it all over, shaving parts off. It's not like sculpting in stone or painting. Or if it is like painting, it's like when you paint on the floor.

Justin:

Are the objects fixed to the inside of the box?

Harley:

I don't know. I'm a little reluctant to talk about what's inside. When Jason and I were doing this drawing-by-touch project where we unboxed these mystery box toys inside another box, there was this mystery that influenced our drawings.

Jason:

The experiment we're trying is to send off an artwork where it's exhibited somewhere we don't fully know, where we're not involved in finishing it. It's about not having an endpoint. But at the same time, things happened. We each have our own frames of reference and ways that what we do gets framed, and maybe that's what we contribute to the work more.

Justin:

A thing that I think is nice about it is that it implicates the role I have as the presenter or curator or maybe more as a facilitator of this space. Because I don't really feel like the curator of this show necessarily, that's more Fiona and Bailey's role, but as a facilitator of the space, and all the aesthetic codes I might identify as functional in it, literally having to do with light or installation needs. The conditions of the space become important to how the final work constitutes itself, because I understand, probably better than you guys, since you've never been here, how a work can be seen or not. So there are ways my action on the thing might make sense or not, and that's probably internalized to a ridiculous degree, but I'll just understand when I approach it.

Jason:

I think one thing is the hole. You don't even have to drill a hole in every box. But it's evidence of you looking at it that will still exist in every artwork. For me, there's a point, pre-entry and post, once I've gotten into the work. The access point is unknown until I find it. Sometimes work feels unrelatable, and it takes some kind of spontaneous view into its interior for me to get awareness of it. That's my experience of art, to get that awareness of an interior or process.

Justin:

It's like automatic drawing or something. But instead of a sensory experience which is very much like those blind drawings you were making, I'm kind of the interloper upon the sensory experience of the thing. So it still feels like an automatic production.

Jason:

You mean, like when you rolled the globe.

Justin:

Yeah, there just needs to be something a bit out of control, you know.

Harley:

Well, when you say it distributes your role in this way, I think about working for a lot of artists and all the ridiculous means of creating these structures or instruments to imagine a space. Whether that's building a model of the gallery that's in another country so you can see it in miniature, or in a 3D rendering or simulation. There's always this imagined agreement between the person presenting the work and the person making it. I don't know what the space looks like, but you don't know what the work looks like in a typical arrangement, really, unless you've seen it in the studio. It's all kind of imagined. This just adds an extra layer like a bonus, a

paywall around it, or something.

Jason:

Yeah. I think what you were saying, Harley, about the awareness of the author and the exhibitor basically facing away from each other is... It's cool to me that there's a point where the unknowns combine, right? I like that part of showing, and I think I like it so much that I tend to pull it into the authorship part, which I think I recognize in how you work too, Harley.

Justin:

In terms of just leaving something to produce itself.

Jason:

Yeah, and pulling in the person, where you're showing, taking that as part of your condition. Or where you might not necessarily have a lot to do with the particular context this exhibition is in. You might not personally, but then, just because you're showing there, it enters your awareness. And then it just becomes part of the work. It's like transmitting your own makeup through the makeup of this new space.

Justin:

Totally. If by using me as an actor here, that's kind of a site-specific move.

Harley:

I think it's just as site specific as the show Jason and I did at the frame shop were we exhibited plein air drawings we both did of fire hydrants, which, you know, the site specificity was the extreme locality of a frame shop that's a block from both of our houses. But it's also working with the distance of the East Coast of the United States to Montreal. It's the same operating structure in this case. We didn't set up camp in Montreal and devise a show from there, but instead we're highlighting that we've mostly interacted over Zoom. And that changes what's possible. I mean, in the context of drawing, you know, I think Jason was talking about how these are drawings, in a way, because we are part of this drawing collective or something. And the fire hydrant show works weren't as much drawings to me as these are. Although obviously these are sculptures in some ways, but...

Jason:

Yeah, the part about it that's drawing-like to me is that you end up with this partial, subjective view of something that you know has a lot more going on. I found that so interesting with Nora's dice drawing she showed us, that she was able to use one drawing to get around the object. The way I was trained to draw was you might be able to draw multiple sides, but you do those as separate renderings. Maybe someone designing an object would show it from different sides to give an idea of its design. But the type of drawing that is in service to painting, I learned it to always be this singular view. My trouble with learning how to draw is that I always felt myself looking around the object and wanting to draw the ear on the other side of the head. As a kid, it'd be a silhouette face and I'd have the ear here, but then I'd have to draw another ear back, because I know there are two ears. But do you feel, as an exhibitor- How do you feel about

being called into this role? Because I know you are also... some people who really get into the role of the curator or the gallerist have this membrane between the content and what they do. As gallerist, they feel they should never be in front of the curtain. How do you feel about that?

Justin:

I feel the conditions of the function of this space have become so apparent because of how limited the resources are to operate the space, to make any show, especially with somebody who's not around in Montreal or in Canada. It makes it really necessary for me to be involved in how the work ends up in a pretty intense way. It became really apparent that if I was going to have shows where these limitations were imposed and people felt free to do what they want, I would have to make myself pretty available to help along these things. I feel it's an interesting position for me, because I'm constantly thinking about my authorship or my involvement as producer. The process really complicates that a lot of times, and I think it's nice, because it makes my role feel loose. The only real thing I have to offer is time to communicate and to try to make myself available for bringing something together. So I'm interested in that membrane having this separation, but also it being necessary to be involved. And there's a different approach people have to this space too, because it's not commercial-forward, so that's not the thing that needs to occur in that way. The artist–gallerist separation is maybe more important for that kind of situation, where there's a person whose role is to facilitate this marketplace at the most cynical level. But I think it's a lot less, it's a lot more muddled here.

Jason:

Yeah, yeah, it's cool.

Justin:

I also think it's interesting that the experience that's going to be created is about something that isn't viewable yet, and the experience of making something viewable, in the most scientific way, because it's just making a hole so that something is actually visible, is also the thing that's making it become an artwork as a whole sculptural object. But there's a weird relationship between looking into the box at a thing inside, and the thing that is the box that has a viewing system to see the things inside it. I'm not really sure what that is, because there are lots of different levels of visibility, I guess, or I don't know, but...

Harley:

I think that something... It took me a second to remember and find what I was talking about. But I went to this screening a few months ago. It was a series of shorter experimental works by Narcisa Hirsch. And she made this video piece where it's a still shot of a part of her bedroom, and then there's an interview between two people, and Narcisa is describing to the guy what's in the room, from left to right. So first she starts with the things that are in the frame, and then it expands. The camera doesn't pan, the camera doesn't move. You're piecing together what they're saying based on the information you were given. It was short, but really kind of amazing, and it calls attention to what this vision into their space actually is. It's limited, but also... I don't know, there's something about it. I think I did talk about that with Jason at some point. I remember describing this to you. To me, that ties into perspective of you seeing the thing, or

there's something about even that limitation of viewing inside the box that reaches something. I'm not quite clear on what I'm trying to...

Jason:

I feel like it's maybe showing awareness as something expansive, something that can pan and can, at times, be encompassed by a frame, and can also move beyond the frame. The existence of the things we are aware of continues outside our frame of awareness. That was another way we talked about this being a bit of a drawing. Awareness is drawn out through this hole, or drawn into the hole, the way a wire is drawn. There's this thing where they call it drawing wire, where you take a chunk of metal, pull it through...

Harley:

You extrude it.

Justin:

I was just wondering if you had a title for the show.

Harley:

I don't think we do yet, right? We haven't really discussed it.

Jason:

Cool. Yeah, it feels like we need to get it past that threshold of having the holes. Maybe the titles of the artworks need to happen after that. And the other thing is, I'm kind of curious how you, Justin, come to that decision. It looks nice, but... I went to a show in Chelsea and it was really brightly lit, and I really wanted to see it without the lights on. Before I even went in the gallery and I could see it through the window, I wanted to see it without the lights on. Then the other thing is about time. You offer your labor time, but then you also have a... The kind of awareness I always feel is lacking in exhibitions is the lived-in part. I usually have this anxiety, an itch that I need to give more time in the space. Sometimes I ask to sleep there, or to have time alone. Sometimes the only way to really get time alone in a space is to ask to sleep there, do something where it's basically not getting used correctly. And lots of people know their spaces really well that way too, even having to sleep in the gallery or the museum sometimes. But the way that we're situating these artworks, literally inside your lifetime, yeah? Like it's a month of your... Or each show is this run of your life that these things are inside?

Justin:

Yeah, here you live, totally, and sometimes really in front of the everyday experience, especially in the stairwell. I walk through that stairwell every single day, multiple times a day. For instance, this last show, we blacked out the window, so it's a lot darker in there, and it's been bothering Gabriela. And there are little speakers at the top of the stairs that glow blue when they're plugged in, so it's dark, and then you get to the top of the stairs and it's glowing blue. And my cat has been running around in the main space, underneath these sculptures that are like 200 pounds, and it scares me that she's gonna get hurt.

Jason:

Yeah, yeah.

Justin:

The whole thing is integrated into a time and a seasonal feeling. It's pretty interesting. I'm looking forward to this one having a longer run time than normal and just running through the winter with them. I think that'll be nice.

Jason:

There's something happening in how you interact with the work that's way outside the frame of visiting the show. I mean, that's pretty common for a lot of apartment galleries and project spaces and things where people are running it themselves, not doing it as a job, or as a place that is not them. Do you put the furniture back sometimes?

Justin:

No, there's no furniture that goes in there.