

## Jan Avgikos

The utilization of ordinary, mass-produced consumer goods in the normative social contexts for which they are intended is unimpeded by the necessity to consciously name all the things we encounter, part by part, one by one. This is particularly the case when things are not distinguished as trophies of acquisition and wealth, but simply facilitate in the most pedestrian sense the basic activities of daily life. In this manner, things such as aluminum pipes, key rings, bungee cords, metal racks, or prosthetic walkers are essentially non-narrative. We use them, we don't think about them.

To appropriate and transfer such things from a quotidian to an aesthetic environment necessitates the activity of naming that must accommodate both the thing's identity and normative function, and the semantic accretions acquired in the process of passing from one context to another. We can't use these common things anymore, we can only think about them. This transfer from fact to (*art*)ifact elevates heretofore inconsequential things to the status of meaningful objects and establishes the basis of narrativity. The accumulation of many component *artifacts* requires that the process of naming be repeated, over and over again, resulting in the identification of iconographical clusters from which the complexity of the narrative structure is developed.

While the selection and unorthodox combination of component *artifacts* may defy quotidian logic, nonetheless they share properties inherited from a common source. That source is the social. In relation to the primacy of prevailing social systems intrinsically encoded in "ready-mades" their rehabilitations as *artifacts* makes possible the creation of a social narrative. Yet the interruptions between a primary function and a reinterpreted utility, or the intervals that exist between facts and *artifacts*, must be accounted for if art is to be designated as something more than a mere generalization of the social. Just as the process of naming must account for the thing itself, its accreted semantic meanings, and the mnemonic potential of iconographical clusters, so too it must take note of the intervals of displacement for their cumulative effect composes a counter-narrative structure. Counter-narrativity affords the possibility of an oppositional force, and thus, of a social critique.

While the differentiation between non-narrative and narrative structure is insured by the elevation of the object to the status of art in recognition of the social, the distinction between narrative and counter-narrative structure isn't guaranteed. A pseudo-reconciliation of the two suggests art's role as social documentary, designed to reveal easily palatable social truths. The function, then, of the counter-narrative as an op-

Art / Artif

positional force is diminished and art is sublimated, on the basis of style or taste or fashionability, as a trophic commodity. As such, it escapes none of the moral codes enforced by the media, by government, by capital, by patriarchal regimes, and the like, that regulate society. In order to effectively critique the prevailing ideologies of the culture industry without itself being co-opted, counter-narrative must rise to the level of a meta-narrative structure, thereby simultaneously laying bare the predatory ceremonies that masquerade as incentives to acquisition and consumption and accomplishing a critique of the institutionalization of art itself. The process initiated by naming is completed in the metamorphosis from fact to artifact to art.

act / Fact

The very titles of Cindy Noland's "Frame Device", "Mutated Dip" and "Slippery Page" allude to this process. The fact of "Frame Device" is the metal rods and pipes, which are assembled to form a double-herringbone cage, and the addition of prosthetic wellies, which are stacked on its four corners. The barrier is neither commonly used to demarcate nor enclose a pedestrian space from the site of a specialized activity - a construction site, a prize fighter's arena, a platform for a disabled person - and the wellies are those that aid the disabled. As artifacts, they point commentary on mobility and arrested mobility. They have invited a wide range of interpretations that can range from institutional apparatus, to a metaphor for the psychology of women is considered exclusively from the point of view of men. The privileged space created within the institutional frame, defined according to the social narratives and counter-narratives of its constituent parts, also assumes the semiotic weight of art itself. In the spirit of mobility no one meaning is forced upon by another, yet the rhetoric of position and distance is clearly initiated through successive acts of interpretation.

Increasingly, Noland has utilized representations of archetypal American figures - from the cowboy, to the cowboy, to the cowboy, to the cowboy - who are characterized by possessing multiple personalities. Fiction from the complex narrative of the American West, is transformed into a member of the Symbionese Liberation Army. She has also represented a series of young women of color, each with a different name, in six different installations from high school courtyards to a university courtyard. Noland often includes several of the figures within the same exhibit, and they are usually placed in close proximity to one another, but they are never designated the continuity of individual installation.

work of art, correspondences automatically arise suggesting an...  
...instinctively imitable... primary urban... social territories.  
Through the auspices of this conceptual habitation, acts of ownership and utilization  
that are hands-off to viewers are now reinstated and performed by these players in re-  
lation to the objects that surround them. Of course, the objects are no longer simply  
utilitarian but have become, through intervals of displacement, mnemonic devices.  
Compounded by iconographical groupings, their secondary properties, such as mo-  
bility and arrested mobility, or pleasure and pain, are now appropriately interpreted  
as properties belonging to the proximate characters. Moreover, localized on the  
same plane, the beautiful young boys of the American West and the  
... are to a large degree interchangeable personalities. Their chameleon nature  
... complicates an already complex counter-narrative structure. While the tang-  
led threads of confusing and often contradictory frameworks stimulate multifarious  
readings, the oppositional force of the counter-narrative abdicates the responsibility  
of a purely social critique. ...  
... by discrete works of art. ...  
... and splits itself. She attains the desired level of ...  
... in terms of oppositional...

**Kunst / Art**

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