

émergent magazine

Interview by Susanna van Roessel

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In previous interviews, you have mentioned that your work does not originate with the need to convey a specific message, but instead, it comes from an intuition that you seek and try to decipher. How does this first impulse usually appear?

I work on multiple works consecutively, so I wouldn't say that there is one particular 'impulse'. It's more that I don't want to limit the way I work to one specific idea. It's important that there is a freedom in the direction the works take as I develop them, as often there are surprises or mistakes that happen in the making, and sometimes these lead to unexpected breakthroughs.

Your works function as autonomous pieces that can be appreciated individually, yet, when experienced together, a certain tension emerges from the combination - could this potentially disrupt the interpretations that we can

draw from them. When working, do you consider the relationship they may end up having with each other?

In some instances, I consider how they might work in the room together, but on the whole, the installation is where the relationships between the works is developed. I don't always want cohesion; it's important that there are jarring moments.

In your latest exhibitions, such as *Underfoot* (Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, 2019) or *100 mph* (Peres Project, 2021), there is a clear intent in the staging of your works to alter the common neutrality of the space. Do you consider the exhibition space design a crucial part of your artistic practice?

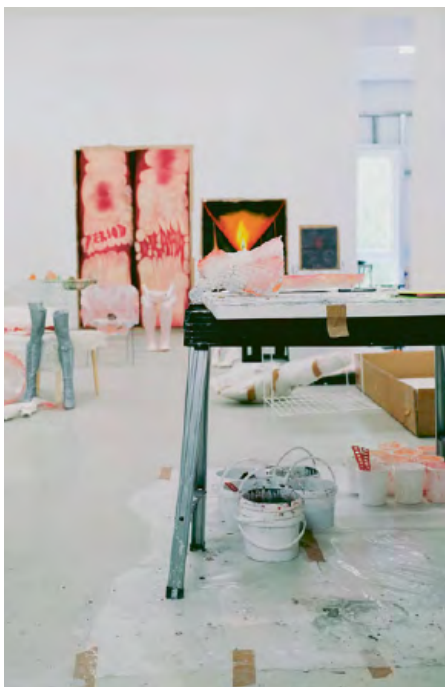
When I have a show somewhere, I always consider how the exhibition will be entered and what a first impression of the work. It's interesting to think of an exhibition space as

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neutral because perhaps it's that supposed 'neutrality' I want to react against. I always try and find a way of making that space mine, whether that's through the install or altering the architecture in some way.

With individual works is there an idea from the beginning or does it appear at the end, when all the artworks are finished?

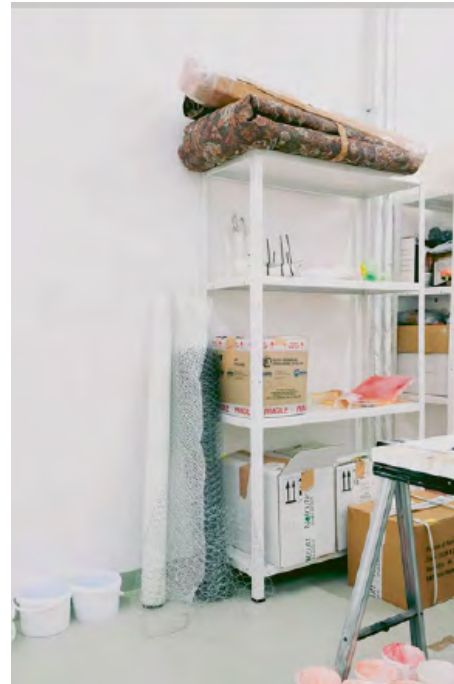
I don't really approach making work in the sense that there is one idea; rather, there are many, and they inform the making process and continue to develop after a show is completed. I see making work as an ever-expanding conversation that gets added to; there are no full stops.



The atmospheres you create within your works are both familiar and unknown simultaneously, just as your works are figurative and abstract, autobiographical and social... You submerge us in the spaces in-between. Is there a decision to remain in a state of ambiguity, to never be too literal?

There are certainly moments when I choose to be more direct in the work; the casts are lifting directly from reality. The cast chaise lounges were a literal reference to the therapy couch as a site of remembering and the piecing together of a life. I see making work in parallel to life in many ways - in that it becomes a time line of objects the marks the life of the maker. There's a sense of piecing something together and not quite being able to get your bearings, like in a dream where everything is familiar and alien at once. I have memories of being a child and seeing the head of a big rabbit costume in one corner of the ceiling

and a clown head in the other corner outside the bathroom. I was talking to them, and I was so sure it had happened and the memory is one of the most vivid I have from that age.



Temporality is also an open question in the scenarios you propose. A kind of limbo that does not refer to any particular time - Does it have something to do with creating a place to hide amid the frenetic world we live in? The notion of hiding is interesting, the studio can become a hiding place. I sometimes think of it like my teenage bedroom - where I would go to escape and draw - somewhere you wouldn't let most people in, it is an intensely private space. That's where I make from, I have to feel like no one is looking.

Motorcycle helmets, wigs, and sunglasses are motifs found throughout your work. What do these elements mean to you in your practice?

I always want the work rooted in the present, the helmets and sunglasses you refer to were specifically used on works to shield their gaze or mask them, like a barrier or protection from something unseen. Often with casting it's very much about capturing a particular moment that reflects the present.

Some of your figures, for example, The Mulch (Peres Project, 2019), hint at building structures, but indirectly. How important is your home for your artistic practice?

I would say it's very important, both in terms of the ideas surrounding domesticity as well as in a more psychological notion of 'home'. The house where I grew up is always a particularly

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generative place for me to draw ideas or work from. Houses hold so many memories - they're full of the lives of current inhabitants as well as the stories of those who lived there before. I once had a shaman do a spiritual reading of a space I was exhibiting in, and she told me a Victorian man and woman were standing on either side of me. There's something fascinating about the idea that the world is full of ghosts - layers of spirits that we just can't see all the time. I don't necessarily believe it, but the experience with the shaman momentarily rocked my perception of reality.



Fragmentation is very present in your work, both physically and metaphorically. Do you consider that the way you arrange the elements leads us to a specific interpretation of your work?

Not really. For me, the fragmentation refers to an interruption in thought or the physical remnant of a memory. I use casting as a way of making a physical snapshot, I very much see them as photographs that occur only once in that particular time. I like the idea that as the bodies I cast change - grow older, bigger or die - that these fragments will remain like a physical record - bones. I'm very much inspired by the ghosts of the past, both in terms of my family and in more of a general way. I often use pieces of clothing from my mum's wardrobe - a recurring pair of boots of hers from the 70s are recast in different works - the clothes are of their time. There's an idea of wistfulness for a simpler time that I'm interested in, how we romanticise the past. I try and bring elements of that into the work through the way I fragment things - a boot from the 60s next to a laptop from today. It all informs each other in the cross-pollination of time and stories creating a layering of content and imagery that references my personal history and a wider idea of visual culture through objects/fashion.



The materials you use in the sculptures and the urgency with which you work with them give rise to fragile forms and organic textures that sometimes seem to be in the process of decomposition. However, the colour palette you use to intervene them is intense, bright and synthetic. What do these colours evoke in you? The way I approach colour in many of the works is similar in approach to making a painting in terms of process. It's intuitive. In the piece 'singed lids' that I showed for the Lyon Biennale, I wanted the resin to be an intense lava orange to give the impression of a scorched after-image you get from looking at a bright light. I use colour and materials depending on the content of the piece and how I want it to feel.

