

I am a 3-D Printer

Among the current spate of so-called disruptive technologies, 3D printing gives consumers access to mechanical processes once only attainable through industrial manufacturing. This ability to reproduce objects through extrusion in plastics and other materials may in the future destabilize established orders of production and consumption. Sarah Goffman links to this nascent technology in the title of her exhibition, which also recalls Warhol's claim that he made art in order to become a machine. But *I am a 3-D Printer* inverts these paradigms, signaling a different kind of disruption. Rather than rely on mechanical reproduction to fabricate new objects or artworks, Goffman recycles the manufactured refuse of consumerism through the creativity and skill of her artistic labor.

I am a 3-D Printer populates the Mann-Tatlow Collection of Asian Art with simulated museum antiquities reproduced on found PET plastic containers. Over fifty ceramic pieces and objects from the collection have been painstakingly copied over several months, one at a time, in a manner that parallels the gradual accumulation of objects by a devoted collector. Goffman fuses the precious relics of the past with plastics - the possible archaeological artifact of the future - to create exquisite objects that traverse categories of art and systems of value.

Goffman is an obsessive collector of discarded things that are chanced upon or sourced through relentless foraging. Her process of selection is guided by an uncanny ability to recognize the untapped potential of the disposable relics of our consumer culture. Each new acquisition connects to other objects within her collection, suggesting new ensembles of work. Goffman repurposes these things as art through sympathetic manipulations, additions and embellishments of form. She organizes these new artifacts in carefully balanced sculptural arrangements or sprawling installations, sometimes with an accompanying performative component.

Within her installations, humble materials take on new relational meanings in complex ecosystems of objects. Different material histories comingled in an installation like *HERE*, exhibited at Kandos Projects in 2014 where the gallery was filled with works that were stacked, grouped, laid out on makeshift plinths or affixed to the walls and windows. As often occurs in her exhibitions, *HERE* blurred the distinctions between the consumption of commodities and ideas by



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blending the aesthetics of the museum and the junk shop. Although it expressed a nostalgic longing for a sense of place, it was difficult to tell where HERE really was. In a more discrete sculptural grouping like Takara, exhibited at the Redlands Art Prize in 2016, Goffman adorned plastic bottles and containers with painted hot glue to transform these discarded utilitarian objects into a sublime collection of ritualistic vessels. Illuminated from below by a lightbox, the colorful vessels in Takara emitted a ghostly glow similar to the effect of UV light on uranium glass.

Goffman's work connects with various decorative and aesthetic traditions that resonate with her: Asian blue and white, and black and gold porcelain, Middle Eastern calligraphic designs and the refined minimalism of Japanese Art. Through appropriation of these different traditions reinterpreted through refuse, her work evokes the history of cultural exchange produced by the Silk Road and the endless recycling and resuscitation of materials and ideas throughout art history.

This new body of work represents the most complex and intricate designs Goffman has replicated to date and required careful planning and execution. A plastic container that bears a semblance to the dimensions of the original vessel is sourced and then cleaned to remove any trace of branding. The reverse side of the vessel or plate is then coated in spray enamel to simulate the gloss of ceramic glazes. After these preparatory steps, Goffman begins drawing the design of the vessel using Sharpies and metallic markers. The process is not closed to contingency however. While some pieces adhere closely to the original design, others depart from it to take a degree of artistic license. In this sense, they are not true 'fakes' but show how deliberate and unintended errors in forgery can lead to new artistic outcomes.

Plastics may outlast us, but Goffman's reverential treatment of these objects imbues them with a deceptive fragility. The gentle mapping of these decorative depictions of nature onto the things that plague our natural environment evokes environmental concerns, but in the final analysis, Goffman's approach is more poetic than political.

Jason Markou, 2017

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