

COMEDY OF PURPOSES

A Thesis

by

LARSON ROEDER

BS, University of Wisconsin—La Crosse, 2012

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

STUDIO ART

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
Corpus Christi, Texas

May 2017

© Larson Earl Roeder

All Rights Reserved

May 2017

# COMEDY OF PURPOSES

A Thesis

by

LARSON ROEDER

This thesis meets the standards for scope and quality of  
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

Ryan O'Malley, MFA  
Chair

Louis Katz, MFA  
Co-Chair

Joe Peña, MFA  
Committee Member

May 2017

## ABSTRACT

In March of 2016, Lars Roeder began a series of performances and interactive installations that were designed to engage viewers as participants in each artistic experience. They have taken the forms of food carts, voting booths, books and vending machines, connecting themes of convenience, commodity, agency and identity with the public. Each work was created to interact with the audience, often times involving a piece of the work given away as a memento of that experience.

In contemporary theory, artworks are defined by aesthetic interaction. Both the art and the viewer bring a unique set of circumstances that determine the outcomes of their mutual experience. Retaining these experiences on the part of the viewer is what connects the art to the whole of society.

The accumulation of these performances was the exhibition, *Comedy of Purposes*, at the Islander Art Gallery in Corpus Christi, Texas. From April 7<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the performances were presented, along with documentation and artifacts, to revisit the works of the previous year and reinterpret them beyond their original context. Amongst one another, the pieces established strong visual and aesthetic relationships. Their reflections as a group embraced the complexities of desire and value in art. The final exhibition became a performance in itself, with many moving parts to parody the idea of exhibiting events that have already happened. Yet, this process furthered the reach of the work, inscribing it with a whole new context beyond its original purpose. These intended functions critique the viewer's perspective to clarify the relationship between art and life.

## DEDICATION

For Ione and Olaf,  
for without you I would not be here.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Ryan O'Malley, and my committee members, Louis Katz and Joe Peña, for their guidance and support; Department Chair, Rich Gere; and all the faculty, staff and students, past and present, of the Department of Art at TAMU-CC. Special thanks to Dr. Laura Petican, Kevin Mercer and University Galleries staff for helping with the exhibition.

Thanks to Michelle Smythe, Jennifer Arnold, Gerald Lopez, Jimmy Peña, Day Wheeler and K Space Contemporary; Elke McGuire, Gregory Santos and the Art Gym; Al Paldrok and Non Grata; Johanna Mueller and the Lion's Nest; Annalise Gratovich, Elvia Perrin and PrintAustin; and the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art; for hosting and helping with the performances.

Thanks to Ben Sorrell, Jared Brandt, Tana Alcantara, Lucas Barraza, Jessica Reyes and Erika Velazquez for their performances in the exhibition; and to Zak Kaszynski for his contributions. Thanks to my fellow graduate students, in particular Javier Flores, Jack Wood, Andrew Murdoch, Ross Turner, and Allison Mott for their help when it was most critical.

Special thanks are owed to Payton Koranek for help building all the components, printing the prints, driving across the country, documenting all the performances, installing the exhibition, and being a limitless pillar of support in a challenging and stressful endeavor.

Finally, thanks to my parents, Mark and Kristy, and my entire family for their support during this process.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
TOWARDS A COMMON EXPERIENCE.....	1
WHATEVER .....	9
POLLING PLACE.....	14
BASELBUCKS .....	17
ART-CORRUPTED LITERATURE.....	21
ART FOR INTERMENT.....	24
LARS ROEDER GALLERY.....	26
PIECE FOR JURIED SHOWS.....	29
UNTITLED (SUPPORT FOR ART).....	32
COMEDY OF PURPOSES .....	34
A COMMON EXPERIENCE.....	39
FIGURES .....	40
APPENDICES .....	51

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	56
-------------------	----



## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES	PAGE
1. Gilbert & George, <i>Take Me (I'm Yours)</i> , Serpentine Gallery, 1995.....	40
2. Christine Hill, <i>Take Me (I'm Yours)</i> , Serpentine Gallery, 1995.....	40
3. Jackson Pollock, <i>Cathedral</i> , enamel and aluminum paint on canvas, 1947.....	40
4. Nam June Paik, <i>TV Cello</i> , video tubes, TV chassis, plexiglass boxes, electronics, wiring, wood base, fan, stool, photograph, 1971.....	40
5. Ann Hirsch, <i>A Basement Affair (still)</i> , VH1 Reality Television Show, 2010.....	40
6. <i>Whatever</i> , Public Performance, Corpus Christi, Texas, 2016.....	41
7. General Idea, <i>FILE Magazine #1</i> , 1972.....	41
8. <i>Whatever (detail of menu)</i> , screenprint, 2016.....	41
9. <i>Whatever (detail of boxes)</i> , screenprint, 2016.....	41
10. <i>Whatever (detail of box design)</i> , screenprint, 2016.....	41
11. <i>Whatever (detail of prints)</i> , screenprint, 2016.....	42
12. <i>Whatever (detail of uniform)</i> , screenprint on textile, 2016.....	42
13. <i>Polling Place (detail of booth)</i> , screenprint and latex on panel, 2016.....	42
14. <i>Polling Place (detail of ballots)</i> , screenprint, PVA, 2016.....	42
15. <i>Polling Place (detail of ballot box)</i> , latex and enamel on panel, paper shredder, 2016.....	42
16. <i>Polling Place (detail of shredded ballots)</i> , screenprint, 2016.....	43
17. <i>Polling Place (detail of voting sticker)</i> , sticker, 2016.....	43
18. <i>Polling Place</i> , public performance, Schaudies Gallery, K Space Contemporary, Corpus Christi, Texas, 2016.....	43
19. <i>Polling Place (detail of ballots)</i> , screenprint, PVA, 2016.....	43
20. <i>BaselBucks</i> , plywood, enamel, screenprint, 2016.....	43
21. <i>BaselBucks (detail of prints)</i> , screenprint, 2016.....	44

22. <i>BaselBucks (detail of prints)</i> , screenprint, 2016 .....	44
23. <i>Art-Corrupted Literature</i> , book cloth, board, PVA, archival pigment print, 2017 .....	44
24. <i>Art-Corrupted Literature (detail of pages)</i> , archival pigment print, 2017 .....	44
25. <i>Art for Interment</i> , woodcut, screenprint, plywood, varnish, performance, 2017 .....	44
26. <i>Art for Interment (detail of plaque)</i> , screenprint, plywood, varnish, 2017 .....	45
27. <i>Art for Interment (detail of prints)</i> , woodcut, plywood, 2017 .....	45
28. <i>Lars Roeder Gallery (homepage)</i> , screenshot, April 27, 2017 .....	45
29. <i>Lars Roeder Gallery (opening reception)</i> , performance photograph, 2017 .....	45
30. <i>Lars Roeder Gallery (opening reception)</i> , performance photograph, 2017 .....	45
31. <i>Lars Roeder Gallery (detail of products)</i> , magnet, pen, magazine, 2017 .....	46
32. <i>Piece for Juried Shows</i> , etching, aquatint, vending machine, 2017 .....	46
33. <i>Piece for Juried Shows (detail)</i> , etching, aquatint, 2017 .....	46
34. <i>Piece for Juried Shows (detail)</i> , etching, aquatint, pencil, 2017 .....	46
35. Piero Manzoni, <i>Solce du Monde (Base for the World)</i> , iron, bronze, 1961 .....	46
36. <i>Untitled (support for art)</i> , insulation foam, acrylic, microprocessor-controlled electronics, 2017 .....	47
37. Marcel Duchamp, <i>Fountain</i> , porcelain, 1917 .....	47
38. <i>Entryway, Comedy of Purposes</i> , Islander Art Gallery, 2017 .....	47
39. <i>Railing, Comedy of Purposes</i> , Islander Art Gallery, 2017 .....	47
40. <i>Polling Place, Comedy of Purposes</i> , Islander Art Gallery, 2017 .....	47
41. <i>Polling Place (detail of forms)</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017 .....	48
42. <i>Polling Place (detail of shredded ballots)</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017 .....	48
43. <i>Art for Interment, Comedy of Purposes</i> , Islander Art Gallery, 2017 .....	48
44. <i>Lars Roeder Gallery (detail of projection)</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017 .....	48

45. <i>Piece for Juried Shows</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	48
46. <i>BaselBucks</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	49
47. <i>BaselBucks (detail of big buck)</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	49
48. <i>Art-Corrupted Literature</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	49
49. <i>Whatever</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	49
50. <i>Untitled (support for art)</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	49
51. <i>Island Cafe (detail)</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	50
52. <i>Island Cafe</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	50
53. <i>Gift Shop</i> , Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	50
54. “I Made Art Today” erasers, Comedy of Purposes, Islander Art Gallery, 2017.....	50

## TOWARDS A COMMON EXPERIENCE

The title of the exhibition, *Comedy of Purposes*, combines references to Aristotle's *Poetics*, c. 335 BCE, and *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a 1947 text by Frankfurt School philosophers Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. In *Poetics*, Aristotle divided poetry into classifications of tragedy and comedy based on the moral of their characters. Comedy, in brief, is meant to subvert expectations by creating a dramatic picture of the ridiculous, and provoke laughter from inconsequential mistakes.<sup>1</sup> In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno describe the transition of art from having "purposiveness without purpose" to "purposelessness for purposes."<sup>2</sup> This describes the conversion from art as an aesthetic depiction to the conceptual in art driving its content. This conceptual shift speaks to the very nature of purpose in art in two phases, initial visual impact and critical contemplation. Whether one defines purpose as entertainment, social statement or self-examination, it is a critical element in art, on behalf of the artist knowing it, versus the viewer, seeking it. Thus *Comedy of Purposes* seeks to elucidate the viewer to the purpose of the works by way of subversive engagement and humorous surprise.

Purpose is dependent on the context of engagement. A shovel has a different purpose when in a garden than in a cemetery. This is the crux of the works in this exhibition. The voting booth has a different meaning in a gallery than a polling place. A book has different purpose when it is read versus deconstructed. The concept of value has a different perspective when related to art or fast food. The change in the works occurs in their context as art. The viewer acknowledges the change from their original, functional purpose to their role as an art object. This notion supports the idea of comedy. The use of specific forms, items and objects is meant to reference the vague notion that anything is art – while not entirely true, it points to the idea that a work is defined by its purpose.

Creating the exhibition *Comedy of Purposes* as a re-presentation of the series of performances presents both a challenge to effectively translate the specific concepts of each piece out of their original context, and an opportunity to explore how the works are altered and

---

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, "Poetics," in *Introduction to Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 674-6.

<sup>2</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans., Edmund Jephcott, (1994; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 2002), 127-8.

informed by one another when presented as a group. This model was based on visualizing a natural history museum where exhibits are presented with artifacts, photographs, documents and interactive content. The concept is to generate as much information about the event in its original circumstance as possible, rather than pretending the work still inhabits it – that would be more like a zoo. Part of the intention for all the pieces in *Comedy of Purposes* is that they are temporary; they exist for a determined amount of time in a determined location. Whether due to the specificity of the concept or the temporary existence of the art object, changing these circumstances alters the piece entirely and it becomes an artifact of the original experience. Though many were re-presented as fully functioning performances, the context was changed, so they were only facsimiles of the true experience. For purposes of investigating the relationship between *Comedy of Purposes* and the individual performances, this text is structured, after establishing a theoretical groundwork, to assess each work individually in a series of essays, followed by discussion of their arrangement, display and context within the final cumulative exhibition.

Any sense of self-deprecation conflicts with the art exhibited in *Comedy of Purposes*. The works present as close to universal content as the Postmodern era would allow, and on the surface, glare with a certain self-righteous morality. They are definitely structured that way, but the true intent is not to teach lessons, just make observations. Nevertheless self-deprecating thoughts persist in asking why these works are privileged enough to make their observations. What gives this artist the clout to be exorcizing these societal flaws? He is certainly not above them. These statements ought to be lobbied by someone more righteous, certainly by someone with more expertise in the fine details of what they are critiquing. But this is the flawed nature of the societal standing of art. The distinctness of its “high-brow” classification by the majority imparts an air of altruism on the entire atmosphere of art, its full operating environment. The cronyist network of artists, gallerists, curators and critics exacerbate these notions as they are all anointed as experts by the same internal coalition. Works which find their way beyond this circle and into public scrutiny are ascribed an elite status imparting a level of expertise, if not a divine rite, on the artist.<sup>3</sup> This sentiment may be due in part to the volatile nature of “15 minutes of fame,” as well as an art world so hostile one could not possibly ascend by chance, it requires a certain mastery or at least nepotism. Regardless, this cultural structure does impose a mental

---

<sup>3</sup> ...even if they were decorated with this recognition only because they happened to float to the top of the swamp.

barrier when one seeks to pursue making certain impassioned artistic statements. Fortunately, to push beyond this, one must only consider the sincerity of those institutions being addressed. They too are simply human constructs.<sup>4</sup> To critique television, programs meant to entertain, distract or placate are still only formats of human communication, they still operate within those conventions. And though they are mass-distributed and one-directional, the method of distribution is still only a human invention. As media theorist Marshall McLuhan discusses in *Understanding Media*, 1964, television in no way predates humanity, and though it has no doubt shaped the course, it is merely an extension.<sup>5</sup> The same ought to be said of art. Forgo the transcendence of inspiration; to attain true understanding, as philosopher John Dewey argues in *Art as Experience*, 1934, art ought to seek to connect with the common experiences of society,<sup>6</sup> these being other extensions of expression, which come to define experience. Thus when liberated from its aesthetic isolation, art is a more effective tool of social critique and receptive of public embrace, translating into greater impact. For this to be effectively achieved, there are components and considerations of an artwork's form and scope, i.e. stepping beyond the gallery and making direct engagement with the viewer. For the works in *Comedy of Purposes* those concerns are addressed subsequently, the previous argument merely sought for the validity to do so.

In 1995, artist Hans Ulrich Obrist curated an exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, London, entitled *Take Me (I'm Yours)*, of which the theme denoted each artist incorporate a component the viewer could take home with them. Notable works included buttons by British living-sculptures,<sup>7</sup> Gilbert & George (fig. 1) and a repurposed vending machine from Berlin-based artist Christine Hill.<sup>8</sup> (fig. 2) The idea embedded in this concept is a physical manifestation of the viewers' interaction. Leaving an impression on the viewer is how art relates to humanity. Thus in the bigger scope of the exhibition as a whole, the art is extended by visitors taking the artifacts with them. The strongest impact is on people who now possess a piece, but

---

<sup>4</sup> Critics are people too.

<sup>5</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, (1964; repr., Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994), 7.

<sup>6</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, (1934; repr., New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 2005), 10.

<sup>7</sup> François Jonquet, *Gilbert and George: Intimate Conversations with François Jonquet* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004) 8.

<sup>8</sup> This exhibition has been re-invented twice, in Paris, 2005 and New York, 2016-17, each time with an expanded roster including Carsten Höller and Félix González-Torres.

Carey Dunne, "What Happens When A Museum Gives Art Away For Free?" *Hyperallergic*, October 4, 2016, <https://hyperallergic.com/323417>.

never attended the exhibition. They merely engage with the derivative, wondering what bigger piece it was from, tinged with jealousy of missing the opportunity for their own experience. Inversely, visitors to the exhibition manifest their impression on the work itself. Considering the structure in which an exhibition is consumed, the progressive removal of components by visitors leaves a visual record of their action in the empty space, disturbed pile, or incomplete set. This idea configures the exhibition as a venue of shared experience over time. At any point, the amount of objects taken by visitors leaves a visible absence while those remaining represent the potential for shared experience. In this way the impact of the work is a shared experience, yet each is unique to the person and their moment in time. Italian philosopher Umberto Eco addresses this idea in *The Open Work* by, 1989. He describes experiences as completely unique to the individual based on their own particular set of circumstances. Each viewer's experience is uniquely framed by every other experience they have had up to that point, and their personalities and attitudes are cultivated based on all those unique experiences.<sup>9</sup> These notions make the concept of art and its relationship to the viewer vastly more intricate and dynamic. Especially when experiencing the same piece, it is fascinating to note how unique the impact of each object can be.

When investigating concepts that rely on a multitude of objects<sup>10</sup> for their manifestation, printmaking is an invaluable tool. Techniques in printmaking are included in every piece in *Comedy of Purposes* either functionally or symbolically. There are multiple facets to this effort. First, many of the instances using print media are strictly functional in their utility. Since its inception, printmaking has been a tool for efficiency to create many copies and maximize distribution of the content. This correlates to an ideology based in populism. Printmaking at the pinnacle of its societal function was used to disseminate knowledge to the masses, thus incorporating it into a concept endows the work with that sentiment; it is injected with a social conscience. This idea ties into the conceptual implications that come with duplicates lacking an original. Printmaking operates differently from other media as it is without such hierarchy. The aura of the original, as discussed by German theorist Walter Benjamin in *Art in the Age of*

---

<sup>9</sup> Eco, Umberto. *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cancogni, (1962, repr., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 27.

<sup>10</sup> "Objects" in all previous and subsequent instances refer to 2D works along with 3D. The contemporary era condones objecthood to all works of art.

*Mechanical Reproduction*, 1936, “withers in the age of mechanical reproduction...”<sup>11</sup> This discussion of original works, with the “aura tied to [its] presence”<sup>12</sup> degrades the multiple as lacking the “enlightenment” so often associated with prophetic art. In print media however, the concept is enhanced by the fact that there are multiples existing under unique circumstances. There is a network of simultaneous impact derived from the distributed print. In *Comedy of Purposes* this idea reflects back on the notion that each viewer is receiving this multiple as an experience, but that experience is modified uniquely to that person. The use of the multiple as an instance of repetition is a foundational element occurring in all the works. When dealing with subjective experience it is important to keep external factors consistent, to offer the same art to all people as a standard of concept, just as every person interprets a single painting with the same circumstances. It is important to note that the concept of the multiple is carried beyond the incorporation of printmaking. The scripted engagement between the artist and viewer should be considered as a multiple, along with the repeated actions of participants in interactive art. The works in *Comedy of Purposes* tend towards a comparison of constants and variables that in turn explore reactions of expectations and surprises.

Performance elements of the works in *Comedy of Purposes* are critical to the connections between the artist and viewer. Living in a world after Jackson Pollock, it is inherent to analyze the process of the artist making the work and the idea of the artist as a performer. Though this critical perspective did not begin with Pollock, it became mainstream and universal. As works such as *Cathedral* (fig. 3), 1947, were most simply a recording of the artist’s gesture, the performance of those gestures were clearly asserted into an art world which at the time was striving for a pure, universal aestheticism and surging on a boon of popularity. The works in *Comedy of Purposes* parlay this notion as their focal point. They emphasize the artist’s action as the point of departure for the content.

The pieces are not explicitly works of performance, just as they are not solely printmaking or installation. They incorporate all of these components to provide an experience for the viewer, but emphasizing just one method does not accurately describe the content. The pieces that make up *Comedy of Purposes* are more accurately categorized by the somewhat infrequently used term “intermedia.” The word originates in the 1960s by Fluxus artist Dick

---

<sup>11</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Work of art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, (1936; repr., Scottsdale, AZ: Prism Key Press, 2010), 14.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.



Higgins to describe works “that seem to fall between media.”<sup>13</sup> This idea stands to categorize artists such as fellow Fluxus member Nam June Paik for a work such as *TV Cello*, 1971. (fig. 4) It is vague to categorize the piece as simply video art; this definition only represents a component. It does not solely fit as a sculpture, because the piece relies on the object being performed, and yet it has too much objectivity for *TV Cello* to fall neatly into performance. The work, to return to Higgins, is not meant to be classified into a pure medium, for that would cede limit to its potential.<sup>14</sup> Intermedia, in not adhering to specific standards of a medium, have an inane ability to interpret their prestige by the clarity of their conceptual message. In *Comedy of Purposes*, the focus is governed by concept of each piece, as intermedia, and each is pondered in terms of its conceptual statement.

This connects another foundational tenet for the work in *Comedy of Purposes*, Marshall McLuhan’s dictum that “the medium is the message.”<sup>15</sup> This is applicable in two ways. First, in the inverse of McLuhan’s original intention, one might say the message is the medium. That is, returning to Dewey, the medium for these works is how they are experienced.<sup>16</sup> They are should be formally analyzed by the circumstances in which they exist. Since their formal qualities are so abstract and complex via a medium-specific scope, the interaction is intended to be their defining visual trait. Secondly, as the phrase is originally intended, the message in *Comedy of Purposes* is defined by interaction as the medium. In this, McLuhan means to express for the viewer, the impact of the medium greatly outweighs the impact of the message. The influence that television, as an institution, has had on culture and social function vastly dwarfs the impact of any single program.<sup>17</sup> The customs and rituals that formed around television are its most important facet and changed humanity’s way of seeing. Society was exposed to a caricatured version of themselves, which they readily began to emulate as reality. This can be a critical rational when creating art in contemporary times. For her 2010 performance piece, *A Basement Affair* (fig. 5), artist Ann Hirsch successfully landed a spot on a VH1 reality dating show to explore the falsities of reality television, particularly their portrayal and manipulation of women in situations perceived as “real.” The crux of this piece was the medium. By navigating the experience as a character, yet relating back as a semi-autonomous participant, Hirsch elucidated the very notion

---

<sup>13</sup> Dick Higgins “Intermedia,” *Leonardo* vol. 34, no. 1 (Feb 2001): 49, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/19618>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 8.

that participants in all reality television shows have a certain self-awareness that is consciously edited out by the post-production team.<sup>18</sup> It is the intention of *Comedy of Purposes* to inspire viewers to these same conclusions. The works are structured to illuminate some critical facet of the concepts they emulate, be they fast food, art galleries or the election process. Each of these critiques is structured, as stated before, with an overarching analysis of the media. These are the relationships between constants and variables; interaction and experience is the primary method of knowledge and understanding, and their function in art makes sense to critique the circumstances under which those methods are employed and exploited. This is what drives the message. Experience is an open medium; it is infinitely variable to the viewer and should be analyzed as such.

Openness is both crucial to the concept of a work and makes it all that more challenging to identify. For one, it has to do with the flexibility of what is open. Umberto Eco discusses art in *The Open Work* as having multiple interpretations, none of which are inaccurate or contradict the other because each operates within their own interpreter.<sup>19</sup> This is certainly true for the extended life of a work. Existing with a multiplicity of meaning creates a dynamic wave on which an artwork can exist in its interpretation rather than one static definition, thus contributing to social impact in a variety of instances. Yet another way in which a work can be considered open is to consider its borders. To contrast, a closed work would theoretically exist in a vacuum and be treated separate from social influence coming or going.<sup>20</sup> An open work therefore can include the circumstances beyond its frame. The wall, lighting, gallery, traffic, weather, and moment in time as related to politics, ethics and culture all dictate infinitely unique experiences with the work in the frame. This notion ought to be omnipresent when experiencing a work of art. It makes for a far more conscientious, critical audience. In listening to recorded music, the song never changes, but the circumstances surrounding the act of listening can greatly dictate what is heard and how it is interpreted.

The collection of public performances and interactive installations which compose *Comedy of Purposes* target various parameters of artistic experience to expose viewers to realms of agency, empowerment, convenience, and tangibility which are somewhat veiled, but no less

---

<sup>18</sup> Ann Hirsch, "Why Reality TV?," (presentation, Panoply Conference, Vaudeville Park, Brooklyn, NY, November 11th, 2011), <https://vimeo.com/33741319>.

<sup>19</sup> Eco, *The Open Work*, 22.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

present, in traditional works throughout history. The central theme of *Comedy of Purposes* analyzes different ways a typical individual may engage in an artistic experience, be they intentional, passive, or accidental. Each piece examines specific parameters for engagement, but all circumstances can be distilled to these levels of viewer awareness. When a performance occurs in a gallery, patrons are presupposed to an artistic experience. This generates a hyper-aware viewer who can both aid the performance and pose a challenge for the outcome. On one hand, in this scenario the participant is more receptive to the experience and more willing to engage when they cannot predict the outcome. But on the other, with the gallery representing a bubble in which purpose<sup>21</sup> is suspended for the sake of expression, attendees approach the space with a degree of openness far greater than how they consider creative content in their daily life – which one may interpret as less authentic. This often presents a challenge to the integrity of how some pieces are received in the gallery setting. It may have the effect of dulling the experience integral to the work. With this awareness, viewers proceed with a deft openness to participation, and are hyper-sensitive to any hidden meaning or agenda that can undermine the authenticity of the experience and, if such an interaction is considered in qualitative scientific terms, can skew the overall statistics derived from the audience. As some interactions function with a punchline to deliver their critical statement, a viewer enabled with that same suspension of purpose may not receive the full impact, and thus the entertainment value of a given piece, which is often emotional and certainly an integral component, ends up somewhat diminished. To contrast the aptness of the participant, special focus is given to the referential form of the piece as it relates to the concept. It is this reference that comes to define and dictate the sequence of a given work. These forms: a voting booth, food cart, website, money, all derived from the ‘common knowledge’ lexicon, stand to regain that ground lost in viewer openness via familiarity. In most cases, the viewer reacts to this recognition with return to a more moderate sense of presumption and anticipation for something out of the ordinary. This concept is something gleaned from Pop, where the lines between reality and artistic representation are not totally apparent at first, and the greater content is gradually revealed through experience. The process of experience is where the substantial concept is derived, and where much of the work in *Comedy of Purposes* starts to become more analogous.

---

<sup>21</sup> Purpose in this circumstance reflects Horkheimer and Adorno’s idea of the purposelessness of art as its ultimate contribution.  
Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 127.

## WHATEVER

*Whatever* was a recurring public performance that has been executed on March 4<sup>th</sup>, April 1<sup>st</sup>, May 6<sup>th</sup> and September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, at the First Friday Art Walk in Corpus Christi, Texas, and February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the PrintAustin Print Expo in Austin, Texas, for durations ranging from ten minutes to four hours.

*Whatever* is an interactive performance in which participants purchase small prints in burger boxes for one dollar, from a cart wielded by the artist. (fig. 6) This exploration of the appeal of convenient, low-cost works of art began as a kernel of an idea to forcibly engage the broader public in an artistic experience. The initial endeavor was derived from exploitation of the cultish devotion that much of the populace of Corpus Christi, and the state of Texas at large, exhibit towards the local fast-food icon, Whataburger. Forgoing an in-depth taste test, it can be discerned that there is nothing particularly exceptional about their product. Rather, it is their cultural presence that fascinates to the point of artistic exploration. Though it began as merely an undetermined artistic prank, the idea unfolded into a significant statement about the nature of convenience and commerce as they relate to the art world.

The performances began exclusively at the Art Walk in Corpus Christi, Texas as this monthly event is characterized by strange dynamic between art, commerce and attendance. The wares available can be primarily characterized as craft – driftwood crosses, t-shirts, and paintings of dead rock stars dominate the rows of booths. The attendees are content to casually browse these products, but tend to invest the majority of their money, ironically enough, in the food trucks. This aversion to art patronage generates a tense air; frustration on behalf of the vendors and apathy from the patrons. Introducing the *Whatever* cart churned this dynamic. The Art Walk visitors were intrigued and excited to engage with the piece, having seldom experienced art that was conceptual yet accessible, let alone wheeled in front of them.<sup>22</sup> The impact has had a lasting dynamic on the entire event.

The physical piece is fairly straight forward, an obvious parody of the Whataburger restaurant branding. Their graphics are particularly malleable, as the color palette is iconic

---

<sup>22</sup> This reaction did not sit well with the “traditional” vendors, who were perturbed that the cart was taking their business.

enough that substantial manipulation can be made without any loss to the reference. Utilizing the food cart form generates multiple points. Initially seen as further development of the restaurant's perceived mission of access and availability, along with the greater national trend of growth in the food truck industry, many of those who interacted with the cart (and before they realized its true nature) exclaimed how it was about time that Whataburger was rolling out their own food truck. In this sense, the cart also embodies convenience. It could be anywhere, enacting an ethereal sense of being everywhere, and proclaiming devotion to customers through its tenant of convenience. *Whatever* mimics status as an evolutionary step in this slice of business entrepreneurship. Yet on the other side of this marketing scheme, there is a relative stigma to food from a cart, prioritizing cheapness and convenience over quality of product; this emboldens the moniker, *Whatever*. The effect of this appropriation mirrors the exploits of Canadian art collective General Idea, in their 1972 publication *File Magazine* (fig. 7), a parody of Life Magazine. In considering the effectiveness of distributing the piece, member AA Bronson noted, "we knew that if it looked familiar, people would pick it up, and they did."<sup>23</sup>

The modifications made for the cart graphics are meant to exhibit an enhanced sense of apathy and dilapidation. The traditional A-frame image is listing over to one side and the subtext reads "good enough." The menu is of particular interest because it sets a point of entry for the viewer. In trying to discern what the cart is offering, many patrons first consulted the menu rather than the artist for information. Although it displays a variety of choices all priced one dollar (fig. 8), the menu is not a particularly helpful. Confusion emanates from the fact that these different items do not correlate to any specific items in the cart; rather the buyer simply receives a burger box at random regardless of what menu item they selected. The seller, declaring this as "value-menu art," references a double entendre of what constitutes value. The notion that art has great value when acquired at low cost contrasts how art is traditionally appraised. The options on the *Whatever* menu form the outer-most design component that develops as the viewer unwraps the layers of the piece. These realizations also happen in the tone of titular buzzwords associated with the menu on the cart and packaging, miniature clamshell boxes decorated in much the same way as the cart. (fig. 9) The apparent degradation occurs when ordering "whatalife" and "whatarelief" off the menu to receiving packages labeled "whatahassle" and "whatastress." This

---

<sup>23</sup> Sarah E.K. Smith, *General Idea: Life and Work*, (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2016), 10, <https://www.aci-iac.ca/>.

further the illusion that this purchase might be food, until the buyer holds their box for the first time to reveal that it has no weight. Inside the box, the anti-littering phrase “when I’m empty please dispose of me properly” is co-opted as depraved parody. (fig. 10) Displayed as an epitaph, the statement furthers the concept of the neglect of value.

The box does contain a small print that, after the process of acquisition, seems almost ceremonious in its prestige. It is a simple two-color screenprint, not meant to outweigh its frugal price tag. (fig. 11) The imagery on the print compounds the confusion with unsettling graphics such as a cracked, spilled cup or a burning book. These prints elicit the feeling of negligence and sentiment of “whatever”; the intent is for attention to remain on interaction and engagement with the piece, not so much the work itself. The impact of the work is in the participant’s reflection on the interaction, confronting their expectations and concluding that the meaning of the piece is based on their experience.

The interaction between the artist, acting as cart operator, and the viewer is dictated by a balance of scripted control and improvisation, and reflects the same sentiments of apathy projected by the design of the cart. The operator, in uniform (fig. 12), is seen slowly pushing the cart and announcing, almost to no one, “whatever, one dollar.” This sets the viewer up to interact most typically with “what is this?” to whom is dryly responded, “it’s whatever.” Thus initiates a wry negotiation of information between the buyer and seller, who tries to make a sale while disclosing as little information as possible. These interactions incorporated many of the following exchanges:

“But what is it?”

“It’s whatever. Who cares what it is, it’s cheap, and it’s convenient.”

“Is it food?”

“No, it’s value-menu art.”

“Can I see one?”

“There’s not really a point. It’s just whatever. I doesn’t really matter what it is or if it’s good or if you like it. It’s only a dollar.”

These interactions are meant to mimic those of the fast food service industry – efficient, unapologetic and cold. Yet via certain iterations of these sale pitches, the boxes attained a nearly perfect success rate. Over four hundred have been sold to date. There is an overwhelming willingness to satisfy one's curiosity, and at only one dollar, it is irresistible. The interaction is memorable and compelling through unexpected circumstance, highlighting the transaction as a key component to translating the message. That message is concerned with value. *Whatever* juxtaposes the idea of art – in the form of hand-made objects that are valued for their craft, attention and dedication – with the value of convenience, things that cost little and can be acquired easily. This contradiction of value is meant to expose the societal tendency to seek and maximize convenience, then question the convenience of experience. It is easier to stay at home, to let the world come to the viewer via the internet and television, to filter experiences by convenience. Yet patrons always leave satisfied after interacting with *Whatever*. They acknowledge it was worth their dollar and time to engage in the piece. The effect of the experience seeks to elucidate that relationship. Though an interaction with art can be perplexing and exhausting, it proves to be a valuable experience. Further, it is the nature of experience to *get out what one puts in*. Seldom is there anything convenient about experience, it is the complexity that dictates its value.

With the repeated execution of *Whatever*, there were several unanticipated and noteworthy trends to which many participants adhered. First, there were two distinct categories of people who bought a box of *Whatever*, those who were more interested and grateful for the print, and those far more interested in the box it came in. This represented participants with two different perceptions of the arts. The first may be described as traditionally minded, in that they have a rudimentary scope of what art is due to limited exposure or consideration in their daily lives. They register art as a painting or sculpture, perhaps certain architecture, but draw definite distinction between what is art and what is not. The box was certainly just packaging.<sup>24</sup> The only art was the small, three-inch square, two-color screenprint that the artist “went through an awful lot of trouble to sell for such a low price.” What further intrigues about this group is that one might anticipate them to be less enthusiastic about the experience overall. But that was not the case, they were just as supportive and elated that their dollar, which had an uncertain fate, acquired them a nice little piece of art. They further supported other people sharing in the

---

<sup>24</sup> Some even offered their box back so they wouldn't have to carry around any, admittedly, inconvenient wrapping.

experience and many times offered up more money to acquire the variety of prints that were available. Their margins as repeat customers were much higher than the second group. Those that were more interested in the box laugh openly upon receiving what they bought. They seemed to understand the concept and message more quickly, at times even without opening the box. While for some, the message was misinterpreted as primarily a critique of Whataburger; there was a similar satisfaction with the entire process and result. The second group also seemed to leave more rapidly. Unless there was impulse to stay and discuss the finer concepts of the piece in-depth, this group was more readily satisfied with their purchase and continued on their way. What also developed was a percentage of both patrons who formed a cult of followers. These people were so impacted by this experience that they were compelled to follow the cart and watch subsequent interactions, even soliciting people to participate from time to time. Often there was a crowd of dozens huddled around watching new people participate. It generated a different atmosphere than moments when people approached one at a time. The cart became much more of a spectacle, generating large crowds and snowballing until the flow of new people stopped. Much of the crowd would then disperse and the cart would move forward to a new patch of people.

Via these interactions, *Whatever* took on a populist theme. Referential design, frugal pricing and the general atmosphere of the audience generated an active experience with a high rate of engagement. Over the course of five performances, the rate of sale was approximately one per minute. This notion speaks to the value of accessibility through art. Though convenience began as a scheme, it became an emblem of its success. It connected more people, particularly a certain fold who would not typically experience art by conventional means. For *Whatever*, conceptually, the art is in its popularity.



## POLLING PLACE

*Polling Place* was an interactive installation and performance dually exhibited from October 7<sup>th</sup> to November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in the Schaudies Gallery at K Space Contemporary in Corpus Christi, Texas, as part of the "HUUUGE!... Outrageous Acts of Politics" art exhibition; and November 3<sup>rd</sup> to November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at the Art Gym in Denver, Colorado, as part of the "Political BS" art exhibition.

With the backdrop of an exhibition showcasing political satire and subsequently the entire political climate of 2016, *Polling Place* allegorically enacts the presumed futility of the electoral process to coincidentally comment on the agency of the gallery visitor. It concerns the circumstances with how a viewer approaches, engages and impacts a work of art in the gallery setting. The artist initiates engagement by facilitating the registration process. The viewer is asked to participate in the “art election” while being referred to a generic voting booth. (fig. 13) Required registration engages the participant in a seemingly formal and bureaucratic process where they are asked to divulge personal information such as address and social security number. The participant becomes entangled in the art experience by virtue of this arduous process, regardless of the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their registration.<sup>25</sup> Upon completion, the participant is directed to the voting booth to select their preferred candidate. Once inside, the participant must choose between two candidates that are at once contrary, yet inconsequentially similar. They are screenprinted and perfect-bound into two opposing pads. (fig. 14) Per instructions posted in the booth, the participant removes the ballot of their chosen candidate and proceeds to the ballot box. (fig. 15) Upon insertion into the designated slot, the box suddenly grips the ballot and shreds it into a pile on the participant’s feet. (fig. 16) In a final step of recognition, the participant receives a “voting sticker” which instead reads “I made art today.” (fig. 17) This statement is the gateway beyond the initial metaphor of electoral futility and societal contempt for the democratic process, and broadens the concept to consider the role of the participant in the exhibition of art. Certainly this sentiment is lost on many participants; they interpret the action as purely political, which strengthens the idea of the individual experience. This dualistic nature allows for a broader spectrum of participants to feel as if they have

---

<sup>25</sup> See appendix A.

triumphed in their engagement with the work. Even unconsciously, the sense of satisfaction is at the root of the broader discussion of the concept.

Rather than solely a political statement, the allegory more critically addresses the nature of patronage in a gallery setting and the impact that the viewer and the artwork have on each other. The registration process foremost, explores the notion of the viewer's qualification to judge art in a gallery setting. There is a certain intimidation attached, a stigma that artworks on display are inherently insightful and profound, and understanding is limited by the viewer's own experience with art. The registration process therefore gives participants a chance to validate themselves; they have been relieved of the responsibility of first contact and are thusly emboldened to further interact with the work. The registration is a facsimile of status, and entirely apparent as a symbolic gesture, but the impact on the viewer was palpable, especially one not particularly engaged in the world of contemporary art. The other reaction to the registration process was one of distrust and concern. The greater context of irreverent political satire contrasts sharply with the coldness and formality of filling out paperwork. In many instances, viewers had to endure the entire experience to realize the initial steps were designed with the same sense of levity.

The voting booth itself and the engagement therein act as a microcosm of the relationship between the gallery as an archetype and the viewer's own spectrum of predicated knowledge. Though the exterior of the booth displays appropriate political iconography, the interior has its own replication of the archetypal white-cube gallery model – unadorned and entirely intent on objectively exhibiting artwork. It operates in declarative purity, as a neutral arena in which to analyze the ballot-art. Further inscribed in neutrality is the assimilated viewpoint. The booth is a narrow and fixed enclosure equalizing the eyelevel of any given participant. In addition there is a dire sense of spectacle associated with being watched struggling to operate in such a confined space. (fig. 18)

Entering the booth is the moment the participant is fully committed and becomes self-consciously that other viewers bear witness – a spectacle that visibly impacts the participant. At this point the intent of the piece becomes more defined. The two candidates offered for selection are presented as two perfect-bound stacks of screenprints. They are creatures, each half-human, half-fish (fig. 19), meant to present a conflicted sense of familiarity and ambiguity, which leads to a confounding decision. They are objectively opposite, yet identical in their apparent

relatability and esoteric meaning. Much of this relates to the judgment of art at face value. To which side does one lean, what is the basis of judgment when there is no qualifying information? Anxiety is fixed to decisions that one is forced into without a full sense of understanding. Reactions to this scenario were dramatically different, from embarrassment to regret to cries for help, manifesting in hasty, superfluous decisions without full comprehension of the participants' own implications of their decisions.

The art world, in many ways, parallels politics. Civilians are disillusioned with the process and disconnected from politicians, resulting in an overarching apathy. For some, engaging with the piece feels like acting, a farce, a scripted procedure analogous to how the political process only fosters the illusion of choice. The act of art engagement is also supported by the script; the viewer merely portrays someone exercising their artistic discretion, not sincerely doing so. While this disillusion connotes a critique of power roles in art judgment it also alleviates the responsibility that comes with choice. The process is more akin to play. This notion is supported by the conclusive act of the performance: the shredding of the ballot. There is a sense of relief bestowed upon the viewer as it is symbolically revealed their choice doesn't matter. But the great political punchline does not wholly fulfill the gravity of the gesture. Shredding the ballot connotes that the vote will not be counted, suggesting a predetermined outcome. This serves as a condemning critique of the institution and visceral completion of the process. Yet the complexity resides in the reassertion of artistic experience. The political act in this circumstance represents the tenuous engagement unique to each participant. The instinct to discern between two things, a foundational human process, is typified by the act of voting and is validated by mass participation and contribution to the collective process. That notion contrasts individualistic, subjective participation in art. The selection process reflects the viewer as a willful decision maker who has exercised their opinion over an aesthetic experience.

The shredding of the work signifies the end to this process. It is the fatal conclusion and release of participatory tension. Morally, the destruction of the work symbolizes the permanence of judgment in the initial stake of the participant. It symbolically dies in the voting process alongside the literal destruction of the print in their mind. Opinion has been exercised and the work no longer resonates the question of its intent or value. The experience is ended. The viewer is only reminded of their role as critic, and their impact on the work by their "voting sticker," which simultaneously advertises the agency of the participant in the full artistic process.

## BASELBUCKS

*BaselBucks* was an interactive performance that occurred on December 2nd and 3rd, 2016, at Edge Zones and various other locations around Miami, Florida, on the occasion of Art Basel-Miami Beach.

*Art Basel* is an international art fair organization with yearly events in Hong Kong, Miami Beach and Basel, Switzerland. It is regarded as one of the world's premier art events and a critical institution for galleries and emerging artists to earn recognition with top-tier collectors and curators. The amalgam of prestige, status and wealth also attract a substantial audience of spectators. The Miami Beach event has the particular benefit of occurring in early December, offering a highly desirable climate when the rest of the country is experiencing progressively frigid weather. Since 2002, the event has developed a reputation as not only an exclusive and highly regarded art fair but also an excessive bacchanal retreat for the global art community.<sup>26</sup>

As with any event of this prestige, Art Basel has sparked a wealth of satellite shows and concurrent exhibitions around the city. Obviously there are more aspiring artists in the world than the event can host and costs are predictably unreasonable, so many artists use this massive gathering as an opportunity to stage their own satellite events. In recent years, these exhibitions have come to overshadow the attractions of the main convention, featuring artists whose work is often more exciting and experimental. Mainstay critics and art institutions readily solidify this opinion in their reviews.<sup>27</sup> This scenario, the push and pull of powerful insiders and innovative outsiders – reminiscent of the relationship between the Académie and the Salon des Refusés one-hundred-and-fifty years prior – has generated a more expansive and dynamic arts event. However, the attendees obscure Art Basel's intentions and reflect a scenario that is inherently unstable.

The event hosts a dynamic ecosystem of participants with multiple roles. At any time, an attendee may assume the role of exhibiting artist, critic, viewer or participant, due to such a high concentration of art and diversity of content. All of this agency is exacerbated by a surge of

---

<sup>26</sup> Eileen Kinsella and Sarah Cascone, "Art Basel in Miami Beach Parties You'll Never Get Into, 2016 Edition," *Artnet News*, November 28, 2016, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/most-exclusive-miami-basel-parties-226411>.

<sup>27</sup> Paddy Johnson, "Miami Art Fairs: Final Thoughts and Reflections," *Art F City*, December 6, 2016, <http://artfcity.com/2016/12/06/the-miami-art-fairs-final-thoughts-and-reflections/>.

intention. Visitors come to Miami to experience the best art in the world, and the assertions of judgment create a mob-like art critique. It is the kind of atmosphere where art can be mistaken for trash<sup>28</sup>, and trash can be mistaken for art.<sup>29</sup>

Through it all, there seems little room for expression. An environment so saturated with art competing for attention and acceptance blunts the impact of any one piece. There are great works on display but each is drowned out by the myriad of equally strong works. All add to a cacophonous rumble of high concept and thoughtful critique. This seems the strongest sentiment at Art Basel – all these artists long to be present among such prestige, merely clarifying the underlying theme that the event is about attention, commerce and capitalist gains.

*BaseBucks* parlays the pomp of Art Basel into a cheap derivative of its original concept. It parodies the second-hand commercialization of events that spur major gatherings of people and critiques the institution of this major art gathering. More succinctly, it makes selling a critical action.

The piece is a free-standing structure in the style of an old banker's desk (fig. 20), its drawers filled with double-sided screenprints of various assigned values. They are designed as oversized parodies of US currency, referencing the engraved style and color palette, while replacing pictorial elements with those that make the object more depraved and detrimental. (fig. 21) The prints make a clear display of their value, offered in denominations of one, five, twenty, fifty, one-hundred, and one-thousand; (fig. 22) and worth precisely as they are labeled. The one-dollar note costs one dollar, the five-dollar note costs five, etc., and inverse to cost, the quantity and thus, the rarity of each value changes. There are five-hundred ones, one-hundred fives, down to a single thousand-dollar bill. This spread offers art at a wider spectrum of cost, pandering to a wider breadth of audience and contrasting with the elitist nature of the Art Basel event. Works at the event are highly unaffordable to the vast majority of attendees, pandering international artists to primarily wealthy collectors. *BaselBucks* is designed with open accessibility to the works in mind. Correlating quantity to value asserts exclusivity, contrasting the traditional system where exclusivity designates value.

---

<sup>28</sup> Jonathan Jones, "Modern art is rubbish? Why mistaking artworks for trash proves their worth," *The Guardian*, October 27, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/global/shortcuts/2015/oct/27/modern-art-is-rubbish-why-mistaking-artworks-for-trash-proves-their-worth>

<sup>29</sup> Elle Hunt, "Pair of Glasses Left on US Gallery Floor Mistaken as Art," *The Guardian*, May 27, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/may/27/pair-of-glasses-left-on-us-gallery-floor-mistaken-for-art>.

The execution of this piece and overall experience with Art Basel was a chaotic and challenging blitz to find and engage with the art fair public. The locations were sporadic, confusing and heavily guarded. There were not so much throngs of people as throngs of artists trying to coax people in. It became evident that the event structure was not intended for mass appeal, it was specific and calculated, targeting those who could maximize their return. Exhibiting at Art Basel is an expensive endeavor and selling artwork is not necessarily the objective for many artists. Those making ephemeral or installation-based works are looking for gallery representation; someone to fund or market their efforts.

Executing *BaselBucks* was disadvantageous due to lack of familiarity with the event layout and overall coordination of visitors. The rotation of events distributed throughout the city made it hard to pinpoint the right crowd. But when *BaselBucks* was strategically placed, the enticement became more effective. Viewers were solicited with “dollar for dollar art” and, “you want a one-dollar print I have a ‘one dollar’ print.” In this instance, participants felt compelled to explain how the piece was ineffective in its financial endeavors, how they were getting the best of the deal, even as they succumbed to participate in the process of exchange. This was potentially a symptom of the overall atmosphere of the crowd. As stated, most came to Miami for the art fair and retained that attitude. Juxtaposed with the many conceptual pieces at Art Basel, the participants were remiss to the mundane and simplistic interaction. It contrasted much else of what they had seen. They thought it peculiar to bluntly critique the commercial aspects of an art fair billed to be so thoughtful and high-concept.

For an in-depth and thoroughly entertaining analysis of money as art, one should seek out “Boggs: A Comedy of Values” by Lawrence Welcher.<sup>30</sup> JSG Boggs began creating photorealistic drawings of dollar bills, pound notes, etc., in the 1980s. He would seek to exchange them for a good or service he desired, always collecting a receipt and exact change for the value depicted in the drawing. The book, in short synopsis, chronicles the origins of this ongoing performance, the chaotic scrambling of collectors trying to track down these spent bills, and Boggs’ eventual attention from counterfeiting police of multiple nations. It is a tale that revels in the work’s satire of the financial institution and how the modern concept of money is merely propped up by faith. Additionally, it critiques the role of art in the institution of commerce and exchange.

---

<sup>30</sup> Lawrence Weschler, *Boggs: A Comedy of Values* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

*BaselBucks* expand upon the concept of Boggs' drawings. Not only do they use art to comment on money, they use money to critique art. The bills are intended as artworks in form and presentation; they are exhibited and sold as fine-art prints. These similarly have their own inherent value, related as all art, to the labor of the process and the quality of the imagery. Screenprinting is valued below engraving, based on its process and history.<sup>31</sup> In the case of *BaselBucks*, value is assigned separate from process. Value is implicated by the price, rather than price being implicated by the value. Money, as the empty middleman of commerce and exchange, critiques the system of valuing art. This nuance hinges on location. Boggs was taking his works to stores with the intent to exchange for goods, yet *BaselBucks*, situated amidst Art Basel, are defined as art objects by their circumstances. They are meant to be purchased outright with money, their form is meant to more clearly assign value and reference Boggs' target – the money itself.

---

<sup>31</sup> Ironically and purposefully, engraving is the process by which all US currency is produced.

## ART-CORRUPTED LITERATURE

*Art-corrupted Literature* was an interactive artist's book exhibited from January 21<sup>st</sup> to February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at The Lion's Nest in Austin, Texas, on the occasion of Print Austin 2017.

The initial motivation behind *Art-Corrupted Literature* was the availability of a venue, the Lion's Nest in Austin, Texas, which was suffering from an unfortunately common trend. Due to gentrification in the area it was located, the leasing costs of the building became unsustainable. They were faced with the decision to close down or move to a more affordable location.<sup>32</sup> This conundrum is laced with the fascinating irony that unique businesses like the Lion's Nest, a hybrid gallery, retail shop, and art-making studio, are what made the now-gentrified East 6<sup>th</sup> Street district of Austin so desirable in the first place. As the demand for housing in such an area grows, those initial seeds of culture are choked out by more hawkish, exploitive endeavors seeking to cash in on the boon of demand. In considering the project, the catalyst of this cause and effect, unwittingly or no, is the people who generate this momentum and shift. They became the interesting point of departure, because patrons are the pinnacle of importance in art and all commerce, yet in many situations can lead to its undoing.

*Art-Corrupted Literature* is a hardcover book presented as free art. (fig. 23) Functionally, it records viewer interaction by inviting participants to remove a page, thereby collaborating in the progressive destruction of the book as a direct antithesis of its purpose. A merman was drawn on each page as a sequential series of digital prints, edited so each page depicted the flesh slowly removed until the final image was just a skeleton of the creature. (fig. 24) This sequence visually depicted the process of physical decay in traditional book form, read from left to right, and progressing through a linear narrative, life to death. In its initial conception, participants were expected to tear out pages in a sequential order, starting with the first until only the final skeleton remained. This was a naïve notion and underestimated the personal desire of each participant. They did not blithely remove pages as part of a process, but took agency in their role to seek out the stage of decay with which they found most aesthetically satisfying.

This proved to be an interesting point, conceptually; as more pages were removed, the drawing sequence exhibited a faster decay. This revealed the nature of impact critical to the

---

<sup>32</sup> At the time of writing, The Lion's Nest is still operating in its original location, but time is running out.



piece. By removing pages, each participant impacts all who participate after, limiting their experience one page at a time. While this may seem insignificant, the piece is severely limited in its content when all the participants are compounded, thus giving the book more meaning and impact. With so many pages missing, the book is incoherent and functionally debilitated. When the last page is removed, the book is a meaningless shell; it exists only as an artifact from which those who participated in its destruction might describe. It represents the absence of information; without the pages it is a lost idea. In book form, *Art-Corrupted Literature* has an implicit purpose of relaying information, narrative, and knowledge with each interaction. But by changing the form of interaction, the participant is actively working against that purpose. The piece then bares a new function – the distributed pages disseminate content in a more exclusive and consumptive manner. Pages torn out become objects of desire, or individual art pieces, rather than just relaying the message of the book. The title, *Art-Corrupted Literature*, is in reference to this shift.<sup>33</sup> It formally contrasts the role of visual art and literature, calling to mind the superficial tone of medium-specificity – a method of art critique which tries to distinguish between the two genres for their presupposed modes of engagement. In this way the work satirizes the consumption of those media based on their specific qualities.

Pertaining to the location in which it was enacted, the desire to participate and consume was enhanced when others were watching. This popularity reflected that of the surging occupants of the neighborhood and the demand to consume space, which led the Lion's Nest toward their eventual displacement. Both need to be consumed to fulfill their functions, but the impacts of consumption leave something to be missed in the future.

*Art-Corrupted Literature* depicts the temporal nature of objects. It is foolish to think anything lasts forever; rather there are different connotations between something exploited and used up, something neglected and forgotten or something that has run its natural course. Yet all of these scenarios can happen concurrently, and many times the concept or identity of a thing can decay long before the physical object if the context or circumstances waste away. The paradox of wanting something to be used and enjoyed while wanting it to be preserved forever is a peculiar

---

<sup>33</sup> The referential acronym of the title is meant to reflect the sentiment as well. Specifically in Austin, TX, ACL is a reference to the Austin City Limits television program and subsequent music festival. The existence of which have created the boon in popularity of the destination while diminishing the very authenticity it purports.

human sentiment. It is like protecting a toy by keeping it in the packaging. *Art-Corrupted Literature* generated these sentiments only after the piece was gone.

## ART FOR INTERMENT

*Art for Interment* was a recurring public performance executed on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the McNay Art Museum and San Antonio Museum of Art in San Antonio, Texas; March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art in Brownsville, Texas; and March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Museums occupy a high-ranking status in modern society. They house collections of culturally significant artifacts spanning millennia and are located across the globe. They offer a unique spectrum of ephemera useful for research, documentation and curiosity, and are some of the most critical institutions of the modern world. Yet there is a veil of mystery about their process. The average person, not introduced to the inner workings of museum curation, may never consider the vetting process required to amass such a broad collection. The presumption is that all decisions are empirical and objective; that there is some sort of universal criteria of aesthetics and significance from which the art or artifact is approved; but it is much more subjective. This is especially true for art museums, where the content is defined for aesthetic qualities that are inherently subjective. Art museum collections are curated around a mission statement and specific region or time period, but within those parameters it can be entirely open to the interpretation of the curators and board of directors for acquiring collections and curating exhibitions. This means that a portion of the collection is never exhibited to the public. For those works in particular, they change in identity to *art which is not experienced*.

Art acquired by a museum collection undergoes a transformation. The viewer's interpretation is dramatically impacted by the environment in which it is experienced.<sup>34</sup> When artwork is situated in an active public environment or in a gallery setting, it is curated into its era; it exists contemporary to when it was made, surrounded by works of a similar pedigree.<sup>35</sup> This context is often times critical to fully understanding or analyzing the meaning. Art of its time, depending on the subject matter, could easily transition from notions of progressive advancement, to the mundane, to nostalgia in the span of one lifetime. When art enters a museum

---

<sup>34</sup> Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 28.

<sup>35</sup> This is to say nothing of a utilitarian artifact – a revolutionary war musket, a turn of the century washboard, or 3000 year old smooth stone used from grinding grain – that has a totally different objecthood when placed behind glass.

however, it can lose that sense of context. Housing a painting in a room with other paintings spanning five hundred years can dramatically skew the original intent and vision of the work. It will be analyzed through a different scope when compared to works of different eras and regions than when it was exhibited in its time, with other works of its time.

This is not to assume that museums are flawed or wrong, this type of display can be enlightening for aspects of a work not previously considered. It is just important to note that art is not generally created with this type of lifespan in mind. Artists don't tend to consider how their painting will change context in two hundred years next to a painting one hundred years older. It is an assignment that happens independent of the artists' consideration.

However, *Art for Interment* was created specifically for that consideration. It is meant to retain agency within the context of its location while questioning the nature of admittance to a museum and how it exists therein. The paradox is that art selected for a museum collection was not created with that admittance in mind. The work gained that distinction long after its original content or purpose was executed, and usually after it gained widespread cultural significance. Further, there is an irony that if a work is admitted, it may still never be exhibited, thus it is preserved in a climate which protects and extends its existence, but without fulfilling its function. The work becomes entombed in the museum, which is the point of entry from which *Art for Interment* operates.

The performance consists of the artist digging a hole on the grounds of the museums named above and burying a small wooden coffin with a small print inside (fig. 25), after which an RIP plaque is placed over the top. (fig. 26) By interring the piece in the ground, the performance considers the boundaries of the museum, while creating a symbolic gesture for taking the work out of context. The coffin is a simple plywood construction and the print depicts a theme related to death and burial (fig. 27), but these facts become inconsequential. When the work is buried, it could have been anything. It is lost to the earth with the only remnants being documentation that the action occurred; the work becomes a concept of art underground, invisible to the viewer. The marker denotes art is located there, but without any indication of the nature of its content. To contrast notions of art in museums being without context, the interred prints are context without art.

## LARS ROEDER GALLERY

*The Lars Roeder Gallery* is a fully functional art gallery, collaborative performance, and social experiment launched on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and exists primarily online at [larsroedergallery.com](http://larsroedergallery.com).

The *Lars Roeder Gallery* developed from noble circumstances. For emerging artists, it is critical to seek any opportunity to exhibit one's work and when alternative marketing strategies arise, it is paramount to exploiting them. The gallery spawned from this notion and presented an opportunity for many people to benefit from a unified endeavor. The mission of the *Lars Roeder Gallery* is to use digital media to promote artists without major investment of time and money. Its tactics exploit the current institutional norms of the Internet and derivative social media platforms to optimize the impact and distribution of its exhibitions with efficiency and quality.

In the current digital age, there is access to a greater pantheon of information at a faster rate than ever before. Society is consistently introduced to new modes of ingesting information, which has changed the conventions of social relationships. Wrapped up in this is the nature of experience. Through digital media, one can experience an event in far more detail, slow motion and from multiple angles simultaneously. Yet this is the facsimile of experience. It is what Jean Baudrillard refers to as the *simulacra*, a hyper-reality. It is so considered because it replicates and supplants reality, therefore is perceived as more real than what is known to be real. Simulacra is primarily based in perception, it is contingent on the notion that each person experiences their own reality and transplants how a person perceives an experience. For example, a person may have claimed to experience a riot because they were watching coverage of it on television. While there is a clear distinction between the two experiences, the viewer might perceive the outcomes as equal.<sup>36</sup> In modern society, the simulacra is becoming ever more prominent and inclusive, people are learning to live with it. This spread is akin to an analogy Baudrillard uses in his text, *Simulacra and Simulation*, of a map that gets edited to greater and greater detail, until it depicts every blade of grass, every molecule and every atom.

---

<sup>36</sup>Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (1981; repr., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 28.

Buried in that parable is the idea that the viewer becomes less and less able to distinguish between the map and the land it records.<sup>37</sup>

As society increasingly integrates with new technologies, it is critical for art to cultivate an awareness of that dynamic. What is real is no longer necessarily substantial and illusion is not necessarily a superfluous gimmick. Intention often drives the validity of all endeavors beyond their perceived status. A digital version of a physical object may have more conceptual weight depending on the concept and intent of that object. – this is the crossover of contemporary society. The direct relationship between art and technology is reflected most specifically in the way tech is integrated into some of art's more ritualistic components. Media theorist Wolfgang Ernst notes, "...Art history [is itself] contextualized in relation to the media technologies in which the visual is embedded."<sup>38</sup> When art and art history is digested through facsimilous reproductions, it is easy to substantiate those methods of art production and reproduction as viable methods of expression.

The *Lars Roeder Gallery* is an online exhibition website, fully integrated with social media platforms, to provide an opportunity for artists to reach a broader audience via the Internet. (fig. 28) The structure offers an efficient and frugal model to exhibit work in a professional environment. The works are featured online and advertised across various social media platforms. To substantiate the work and mitigate any stigma that may exist from exhibition in a digital gallery, images of the work and gallery are documented in a way to give the illusion that there is a physical space from which the business operates. (fig. 29) These depictions are meant to authenticate the work to the online viewer while creating a sense of longing to experience that physical space. Because the images contain some incongruencies, prolonged looks at the documentation are meant to generate a sense of confusion and disturbance in the viewer; these are cracks intentionally left to reveal the simulacra. These points are where the *Lars Roeder Gallery* most closely straddles its function as a gallery and its identity as an art piece. It most greatly connects to the viewer on the level when they begin to see through the façade and apply that same critical eye to the cracks in other institutions. Even established commercial enterprises may run a front at some point to hide an element of human vulnerability and insecurity.

---

<sup>37</sup> Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, ed. Jussi Parikka, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 35-36.

The model for collecting these images and what makes the gallery so efficient is that there are multiple shows and openings documented at one time. If only documentation is needed, then the event itself can be streamlined to its photogenic core. Posing for opening photos takes up much less time than trying to capture photos at an opening, and if the end product doesn't exhibit any difference, the time saved can be used to photograph another opening, and another. In its inaugural round, five openings were documented, thus the first five months of operation were documented in one afternoon. (fig. 30) This process focuses on the trends of digital culture and the reality of media. The viewer has a nearly full experience of the art from their digital device, but the record of impact through social media interactions and internet exposure are the true collaborative products of the *Lars Roeder Gallery* as a conceptual artwork.

Another notion the *Lars Roeder Gallery* seeks to exploit about art in the digital age is that physical works leave a digital trail. This exists in many ways, as artists may upload images of their works as they are being created, or works may be reproduced in digital publications and websites. These traces have a quality of being infinitely reproducible and malleable to suit any number of derivative functions. The gallery is meant to have the inverse effect – it is a digital piece that produces a portion of physical ephemera – furthering the illusion of physical presence and elevating its de facto status.

The gallery has actual marketing materials, pens and magnets, but its greatest investment is producing a physical catalog for each show. (fig. 31) This object substantiates the entire practice because it presents the entirety of the exhibition just as the gallery does, as a derivative reproduction. The catalog is substantially less effective at exhibiting the artwork but its physicality provides the gallery an air of prestige.

Early experiences have caused serious confusion amongst the viewers. They flip from thinking it is a joke to thinking it is a real venue, with no clear answer to how the gallery operates. This form of intrigue is key to the growth of gallery; viewers pursue answers until they are invested in the gallery regardless of whether it is real or not. They become proponents, realizing that the discernment is not about whether it is real or fake. The *Lars Roeder Gallery* is about the digital experience of the art. What is real is embedded in that experience.

## PIECE FOR JURIED SHOWS

*Piece for Juried Shows* was an interactive installation that was accepted to the 45<sup>th</sup> International Art Show at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art in Brownsville, Texas, from March 22<sup>nd</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Juried exhibitions are a critical component to an emerging artist's practice. They function as a measurable achievement. Competitively selected by a jury of peers, they function akin to the peer-reviewed journal in the sciences. Accepted works receive recognition, approval, and the exhibition – perceivably as a platform to spread their message. But after the conclusion of the exhibition, the benefits become incrementally hazy. The standard submission fee, while admittedly necessary, can be regrettably exploitable and complicating in the process. Acceptance into a juried exhibition does not necessarily guarantee recouping the submission fee; it does not even suggest it. On the contrary, it often incurs further cost through framing and shipping to the venue. Juried shows are more effective as a fundraiser for galleries than a lucrative endeavor for artists, and can be exploited as such. Unlike articles contributed to a scientific journal help to cultivate the scientific community, juried exhibitions seldom have any impact on the arts as a whole. Galleries derive profits from maximizing outreach of submissions, rather than a traditional exhibition where profits are derived from maximizing patronage, in line with the objectives of the artist. For a juried exhibition, resources are primarily spent enticing artists, rather than buyers. The foundation of the juried show can seem a conflict of interest that is inherently exploitive towards artists, and yet it is an irreplaceable institution. Juried shows are still a vital stepping-stone in an artist's career, yet due to the nature of their process, each should each be considered a strategic gamble and be shrewdly analyzed in order to maximize return.

The overall quality of a juried exhibition, commonly under an open theme<sup>39</sup>, presents itself as scattered, unconnected and chaotic. This is compounded by the trend, in most instances, to accept as many submissions as can fit on the walls. This sporadic element of curation can distract the viewer, who may subsequently be less apt to connect and potentially buy a piece, ironically working against the gallery's original intent. It is without question that the aesthetic

---

<sup>39</sup> This is opposed to a restrictive theme like "watercolors of birds native to New England". That would be cohesive.



experience of the whole factors in the transaction of a single piece. The randomness of a salon-style juried show does not benefit this experience.

The business of juried exhibitions is at the crux of *Piece for Juried Shows*. This work seeks alternative ways to recoup the costs of the process while offering a more intimate and interactive art experience for the viewer. In the scope of the juried show, this interaction competitively elevates this piece above the others in the exhibition, yet in terms of relational aesthetics, works to influence all others around it. When the viewer becomes aware of the interactivity of *Piece for Juried Shows*, they subsequently consider the idea of interaction with all the other pieces to varying degrees.<sup>40</sup>

*Piece for Juried Shows* grew from the acquisition of an Oak Manufacturing Company Bulk Capsule Vending Machine. (fig. 32) The contraption presented a unique opportunity to double as an art object and art object dispenser. Further, the value associated with products in these machines, which exist in every corner of the globe, is low cost and inherently low-quality. Not only are the products inexpensive, they are not even worthy of a person to sell. For a capitalist society, built upon personified consumption,<sup>41</sup> the inhumanity of a vending machine is a psychological red flag. This contrasts with *Piece for Juried Shows* vending a uniquely personal commodity: art. Its value is derived from the craft and prestige of the artist. The contradiction of making it available through an impersonal dispenser highlights the extremity of those two perspectives, and the very installation of the piece in a gallery represents the antithesis of two institutions. In the supermarket foyer, these machines are often overlooked, except perhaps by children towards whom they are marketed. In the gallery, however, the piece attracted a lot of attention. It was recognizable out of context and thus drew curiosity. At first the viewers did not consider trying a machine they perceived merely representational. It was only after some urging that they realized the machine retained its original function and was meant for participation.

The amount of prints and capsules in the machine are specific to each juried exhibition's entry fee. For the 45<sup>th</sup> International Art Show at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art, the submission fee was forty dollars. This meant that the piece was delivered containing 160 capsules to be sold at twenty-five cents apiece. Therefore if each capsule sold, the *Piece for*

---

<sup>40</sup> The museum started to have an issue with children touching all the other artworks, as reported afterwards.

<sup>41</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Frederick Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (1867; repr., New York: Random House Inc., 1906), 82.

*Juried Shows* would recoup the total cost of the submission fee. At the end of the show in Brownsville the earnings totaled \$25.25, a 63.125% return.<sup>42</sup>

Inside each capsule was a quarter of an intaglio print. (fig. 33) Utilizing the intaglio process is effective in translating great detail at a small scale, and its history accounts for use in producing works of art, textiles, wallpaper and money. The composition references pillaging, stealing, or hoarding treasure – a highly-exaggerated rendition of how one might interpret the model of a juried exhibition. Each piece is labeled with the location of the venue. Numbering the edition in twenty-five-cent increments out of the full forty dollars, rather than ordinary integers, further emphasizes the monetary transaction and explicit value of each quarter of the print, rather than the whole image. (fig. 34) Offering quartered prints creates a constrained experience and limits role of viewership, but aids in sales because it is a great motivator for repeat customers who attempted to complete the full piece.

The *Piece for Juried Shows* offers a way to inject the very contemporary notions of artistic experience, interactivity and relational aesthetics into a model which itself is very Modern,<sup>43</sup> as one that judges objects against objects. The reactions that it garnered at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art were that of excitement towards a unique experience for the exhibition and an uncommon one for art en masse. Initially, patrons had to be coaxed by the docents to engage with the machine, but realizing the freedom to interact with an object they knew as familiar, they came in droves. Each viewer received a renewed sense of agency, their investment was rewarded and they became the crucial, final component to the piece.

---

<sup>42</sup> This is to say nothing of the extended costs of entering a juried exhibition. If a work gets in, it accumulates the cost of framing and postage or gas to transport the piece to the gallery. The piece accumulates cost of paper, ink, press time, studio fees and food during production. On the whole the system is lacking in total compensation. The simplicity of just trying to make back the submission fee, the most superfluous of all costs, is meant to draw attention to these other expenses.

<sup>43</sup> *Modern*, in this sense refers to Modern art, created between 1840 and 1940, approximately.

## UNTITLED (SUPPORT FOR ART)

*Untitled (support for art)* is an interactive sculpture created for the exhibition *Comedy of Purposes*, at the Islander Gallery in Corpus Christi, Texas, April 7<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

The gallery pedestal is a concise delineation between art and non-art. For the viewer, it indicates a barrier containing the art object. Both artist and viewer have been aware of this relationship for some time. Certainly, in the 1960s, minimalism broke down the separation of art from the viewer and in the 1990s, *Relational Aesthetics* endowed the pedestal, along with all other components of a gallery's installation as contributing to the art itself<sup>44</sup>. Italian artist Piero Manzoni understood this relationship; he exhibited it with sublime humor in his 1961 piece, *Solce du Monde (Base for the World)*, a public sculpture of an upside-down pedestal. (fig. 35) *Untitled (support for art)* further explores these factors as it analyzes the way the display components physically alter a viewer's experience, how the display itself becomes the art, manifesting the frenetic confusion and chaos of a gallery environment. *Untitled* is a 10-inch foam box painted as a small, white, gallery pedestal with a label affixed to the top. (fig. 36) It is controlled by a microcomputer,<sup>45</sup> so when someone is overhead looking down at the information on the label, a motion detector signals the computer to spin around and drive away erratically, making it impossible to read. It maneuvers around in a random pattern, using sonar to avoid obstacles until it comes to rest in a new safe location and begins detecting for motion again. Thus the pedestal contrasts all pedestals before it. It navigates time, space, viewership and information with a blithe shyness that mimics the average viewer. The pedestal makes the viewer actively chase content.

In turning the pedestal into art, *Untitled* adds to the conversation about viewer interactions and the extensions of artworks. Having the support placed in the spotlight is not meant to specify the importance of the pedestal; rather it clarifies the support of art for other means and expresses the physical object as support for the concept. Starting with Duchamp's *Fountain* (fig. 37) and championed by postmodern art, the expression of the concept far

---

<sup>44</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods, (Dijon: Les Presses du Reel, 1998), 26.

<sup>45</sup> See Appendix B.

outweighs the physical object. The urinal itself, in Duchamp's case, is meaningless on its own accord, but considered critically, in the new environment, made a clear statement about art's objecthood and relation to the viewer. The *Untitled* pedestal, applies a sentient personality to a purposely meaningless and formless object. The traditional gallery pedestal is meant to act as a blank canvas, practically invisible. It is meant to play host to the art. When left empty it receives a new identity, when endowed with navigational capabilities, it has a personality. Part of the art it supports is both the space it vacates and the space it moves to occupy. It expands the reach of art to all corners of the gallery floor.

Endowing the pedestal with mobility is in direct contrast to its presumed function to statically hold up a piece. This reorientation causes the viewer to question the function of all art alongside those elements delineated as support. The relationship between a painting and its frame to the relationship between the *function* of a painting and the *function* of its frame denotes a relationship akin to derivatives and integrals in calculus. The interconnection between the two is the basis of the viewer's engagement. These pieces are all components of the viewer's experience, and while some are subconscious, they certainly should not be neglected. A pedestal is intended to create a comfortable viewing angle and a pure environment allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the piece. The target of the *Untitled* pedestal is the unforeseen impact on the so-called pure environment. Having no context may actually give less information to an artist's intention or their circumstances for creation.

Another intention of the pedestal is to make its label unreadable and thus subvert its function. A gallery label can be considered to be a crutch. It divulges answers to the content of a piece and is commonly sought when the viewer is left stranded. Relying on the label may consequentially engage the viewer with an unintended bias when looking at the piece. This may be the price, the title or the year; all can impact the viewer's experience. If one knows they will be looking at a Picasso before they see it, there is a predicated perspective rather than analyzing the work from a purely visual standpoint. This is not to say that labels are flawed or unnecessary, rather it is the intention of *Untitled (support for art)* to show these elements can impact viewer experience and should be considered in that light.

## COMEDY OF PURPOSES

*Comedy of Purposes* was an exhibition of interactive installations and performances executed across the country from March 2016 until it was open to the public from April 7<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Islander Art Gallery in Corpus Christi, Texas. The reception on April 13<sup>th</sup> included reenactments of several of the performances.

Several components were included as part of the installation of *Comedy of Proposes* to enhance<sup>46</sup> the viewer's experience from when they first enter the space. The Islander Art Gallery's double inside doors were labeled, unique to this exhibition, *enter* on the left and *exit* on the right (fig. 38) and a rail bisected the length of the long, narrow gallery. (fig. 39) Visitors were herded down the entire left side before they could turn the corner and return down the right. This made it easier to solicit participation in the interactive works. Also placed at the front were a few other museum staples. The informational pamphlet<sup>47</sup> directed the viewer to through the gallery in sequence as it offered insights to each piece and other aspects of the exhibition. Self-guided audio tours, available for a donation, controlled the visitor with supplementary dialogue, although the information was not always informative. Some tracks included seemingly incongruous anecdotes, reflections by the artist, and parodies of the pieces themselves to contrast any notion that works of this nature are calculated and precise. When dealing with public participation, every variable that can impact artworks will occur. No matter the type of control or constraint, the piece will take on a life of its own. The audio, rather than cold arbitrary insight, offered a human variable that at times clashed with the intent of the piece rather than facilitate its further understanding.

The impetus for controlling how people moved through the gallery dictated the influence each piece had on the next. Having participants register to vote as soon as they arrived generated more impact than if they had registered near the end. The agency provided by the registration was extended to all the pieces. Similarly, ending with the *Whatever* cart spread the apathetic punchline through the whole experience and heightened the interconnectivity of the many themes and outcomes. Within the framework of the exhibition, components such as photographs and

---

<sup>46</sup> Enhance is a nice way of saying control.

<sup>47</sup> See appendix C.

video were added to each piece to further the narrative beyond display of documentation and artifact. These elements enhanced the conceptual statement of each piece and made clear that the works were out of context in the gallery setting.

The exhibition of *Polling Place* had multiple elements adapted to its re-presentation. This was critical because it was first piece to engage the viewer upon entering and did so in a very direct, confronting way. The piece also retained lots of artifacts and was one of the few that performed simultaneously in two specific locations. In *Comedy of Purposes*, the two booths were used as book ends for the artifacts of the piece. (fig. 40) The completed registration forms of past participants were arranged on the wall to spell “cast away,” (fig. 41) as a layered reference to casting votes, thrown out votes and forms, and identifying voters as neglected and disenfranchised. Labeling them as castaways presented a bleak interpretation of the outcomes of the work and the political process. Beneath the words were the shredded ballots of the past performances, with footage playing to show the original intent and execution. (fig. 42) Two performers operated the piece during the reception, registering people to vote and distributing stickers, until the remaining ballots were all shredded. The added elements in the re-presentation of this piece shifted the sense of agency from the original context, operated during the peak of the 2016 US election cycle, to showcase a sentiment of dejection analogous to the current political climate.<sup>48</sup>

The display of *Art for Interment* actively debunked all the mystery associated with the piece. Intended as a solo performance, an audience was not necessary. The exhibition displayed a sample coffin (fig. 43) and photographs from each interment. Clarifying the elements included in the process provoked the viewer to consider the act of digging up a museum lawn and burying a small box.

The *Lars Roeder Gallery* was presented to reveal the illusion of how its content is created. Video footage from the first round of openings was projected at life size, creating an illusion of authentic experience, analogous to the illusion of authenticity presented online. (fig. 44) The corner of the gallery dedicated to this piece also included the catalog from the inaugural exhibition, and was staged so people could sit in the dark and browse the gallery on their mobile devices, the glow further distorting the projection. This interaction represented the push and pull between all iterations of the gallery.

---

<sup>48</sup> This climate is more akin to a hangover.

*Piece for Juried Shows* needed little else to impact its content; it was supported by photographs of the piece being operated at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art. (fig. 45) The fact that the piece was exhibited in *Comedy of Purposes*, not juried in, changed the concept entirely. People still interacted in the same ways, they continued to purchase the capsules that remained from the Brownsville exhibition, and after completing their action, were rewarded with an incomplete and inauthentic object, a reminder that they were not experiencing the piece in its full capacity, they received the leftovers.

*BaselBucks* was the piece most impacted conceptually by the change of venue. Because it parodied an art world institution rather than a common-knowledge subject, the piece required more tact in its re-presentation to make an effective conceptual statement. In *Comedy of Purposes* the ephemera was structured to explore the aspect of art as money and the exchange between the two. The case, which originally totaled five-thousand dollars, was displayed next to a plexiglass box containing all the money exchanged for *BaselBucks* in Miami so that the pair still totaled five-thousand. (fig. 46) Accompanying this was the head-in-hole big buck (fig. 47) where people could insert their face and create a unique experience fit for distribution on any social media platform. This object parodied the creation of derivatives of a well-known object or artifact to further expand its recognition or generate further income from it. This was similar to the initial function of the *BaselBucks* at Art Basel, they were meant to be a cheap, near-alternative to the real experience. These gimmicks were effective in *Comedy of Purposes* as there were more bucks sold than at Miami Beach. This was due in part to a lack of competition, the benefit of a solo show. The bucks took on a new identity in the gallery; they were solely coveted as art objects. This related to the relative value of the objects in *Comedy of Purposes*, as the most expensive object was the one-thousand dollar buck, not so at Art Basel. Displaying the bucks beyond Miami diminished their identity as a tongue-in-cheek knock-off of the main event. Among art with similar concept, they were analyzed as critical of art commodity.

The display of *Art-Corrupted Literature* presented the biggest disappointment for viewers who did not experience the actual event. The intention was to represent the longing of a missed opportunity, which was partly motivation for the original piece. The empty shell was displayed only for visitors to open and wonder what it once contained. (fig. 48) This answer was found in the photographs and video displayed on the wall. It showed the actions of multiple participants, tearing out page after page, until the entire story became clear. Yet, the documentation didn't

offer a clear depiction of what the book contained, only fragments that visitors to *Comedy of Purposes* were left to piece together.

The final piece was the *Whatever* cart. This too was operated during the reception by a frustratingly apathetic vendor, surrounded by photographs of past crowds and sales at the original events. (fig. 49) The differentiating context in the gallery was that the cart was not roaming; it stayed in one place demanding that viewers come to it. This protocol heightened the discord of its presence in the gallery. To remain static undermined the original function and parody of convenience and availability. Its removal from context reoriented all the works exhibited in *Comedy of Purposes*. They reflected on one another rather than their original environments, and highlighted the importance of that environment when experiencing art. Having the cart at the conclusion seemed to comment on the exhibition as a whole, stating that it was all “whatever.”

The *Untitled (support for art)* differed from the other pieces because it was created for the exhibition and programmed with the floor surface and obstacles in mind. *Untitled* attempted to break the sequence through which visitors were guided to move. As they shifted from piece to piece, the pedestal cruised back and forth across the gallery, evading anyone nearby, but also connecting and unifying the space it navigated. Suddenly the small pedestal became as big as the room. It encompassed all the other pieces and the attendees in the gallery. (fig. 50)

In a specific installation during the reception, visitors were offered food halfway through the gallery. It is customary practice to offer refreshments at an art opening, but due to complex restrictions at this particular institution<sup>49</sup> and keeping in the spirit of the exhibition, what was provided were only prints of food. (fig. 51) Foremost, this was a direct reference to the facsimile of authenticity on which many of the pieces were based, and became yet another art object for visitors to enjoy and take home. Under the moniker *Island Cafe*,<sup>50</sup> a worker was live-printing woodblocks of cake, wieners and carrots onto paper plates, appealing to a variety of palates and dietary choices. (fig. 52) These were not only free, but were freshly prepared on site. The consequence, however, was that the wet ink made a mess of unsuspecting visitors, much worse than a trail of crumbs.

---

<sup>49</sup> The language in the contract between the university and their food service company makes it challenging to acquire food for an art opening. They have exclusive rights to supply food at all such events. This is a common occurrence with university dining services.

<sup>50</sup> The name plays off “Islander Art Gallery” while parodying the venue’s isolated location.



At the conclusion of the circuit through the gallery, visitors arrived at the gift shop. This space contained derivative ephemera from many of the pieces in the show, all for sale. It warranted obvious reference to the 2009 film by the artist Banksy, *Exit Through the Gift Shop*,<sup>51</sup> a harsh critique of the commercialization of art, and seeks to be antithetical to capitalism in its presentation. The graphics from many of the pieces were printed on t-shirts, coffee mugs, mousepads, pens, magnets, tote bags and bumper stickers. (fig. 53) Some of the pieces carried their own conceptual clout, such as erasers that incorporated the “I made art today” quote from the voting sticker in *Polling Place*. (fig. 54) The price of each item was egregiously high, but signs placed amongst the products denoted everything was fifty percent off. This arbitrary element caused awareness of the subjectivity of the pricing and made the whole shop a facsimile. The conceptual impact of the gift shop came from the variety and volume of the objects as a whole. *Comedy of Purposes* will live on through the distribution of these artifacts just as with *Take Me, I’m Yours*. The gift shop is more representative of the exhibition as a whole. It is a last attempt to validate events that already happened. The pieces beg to be remembered, even by those who weren’t there. The whole interaction in the gift shop gives agency to the visitors as they are leaving. Purchasing a memento declared how memorable they thought the work had been.

All these components, (the audio, gift shop, barrier, etc.) existed as props for the show rather than pieces that stand on their own. They are all elements to the final piece, which is the exhibition itself. Though it was conceived to re-present past performances, the gallery in effect had to be considered as its own functional work. Structuring *Comedy of Purposes* as a museum created its own insightful experience. The calculated nature in which it was executed, controlling the flow, offering supplemental artifacts, defined the experience between the works as equally valid points of engagement. Defining the exhibition a unique experience further justified all the pieces within; not doing so would have been dishonest or inauthentic. At its closing, *Comedy of Purposes* was left with its own set of artifacts. The visitors depleted the *Piece for Juried Shows* and the ballots in *Polling Place*. Very few objects remained in the gift shop; it was well picked over. Experiencing the amalgam of these performances left the viewer considering the complex relationship between the works, as indicated by the diversity of objects they took home.

---

<sup>51</sup> Banksy, *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, (United Kingdom: Paranoid Pictures, 2010, DVD).

## A COMMON EXPERIENCE

Collecting the pieces together for one exhibition formed clear connections between many of the pieces, and the major themes became more apparent and tangible within each one. By tantalizing the viewer with cheap or free art, the interactive experience compelled a desire to acquire multiples of each object. People still participated in *Piece for Juried Shows* even though the full experience was hindered by limited availability of prizes that could only be attained by chance. Patrons to the *Whatever* cart would come back three, four or five times to get another box, even though the print inside was the same. In the voting booth, participants expressed immediate regret in shredding their ballot, wishing they still had it and were overcome with desire to take another. The desire stemmed partly from feeling cheated or fooled, but often it was the availability and recognition of their experience that drove people to seek to the work.

The desire was generated by a manipulation of the viewer's perception of the value of art. By asserting value as low-cost, viewers were reoriented in their agency of critiquing art based on value. Even more so was the effort to illuminate the construct of value, and leave desire unmitigated by the fact that assignments of value are inherently subjective. The viewer was empowered to critique the effectiveness of art based on experience and consider the work from a broader societal perspective.

The appropriation and parody of popular images and institutions worked effectively to draw people in. It offered a familiar comfort, enough for the viewer to interact with an unfamiliar endeavor. Some stigma with art, especially in the contemporary era, is that works have become so esoteric there is no point of entry without detailed instruction or inside knowledge. Having a clear entry point is what makes the pieces in *Comedy of Purposes* so accessible. Offering an enlightening experience to a broad audience strengthens its populist alignment.

The works in *Comedy of Purposes* hinge on the viewer's experience. Once the viewer is engaged by the curious form, their interaction generates the analogy or conversation about experiencing art within an encompassing social context. Art does not exist in a vacuum. Dewey uses the analogy that a mountain peak is merely an extension of the earth.<sup>52</sup> Art can relate to all kinds of experiences to sustain a more comprehensive existence. The work included in *Comedy of Purposes* is meant to clarify those connections between art and life.

---

<sup>52</sup> Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 2.

## FIGURES



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5





Figure 6

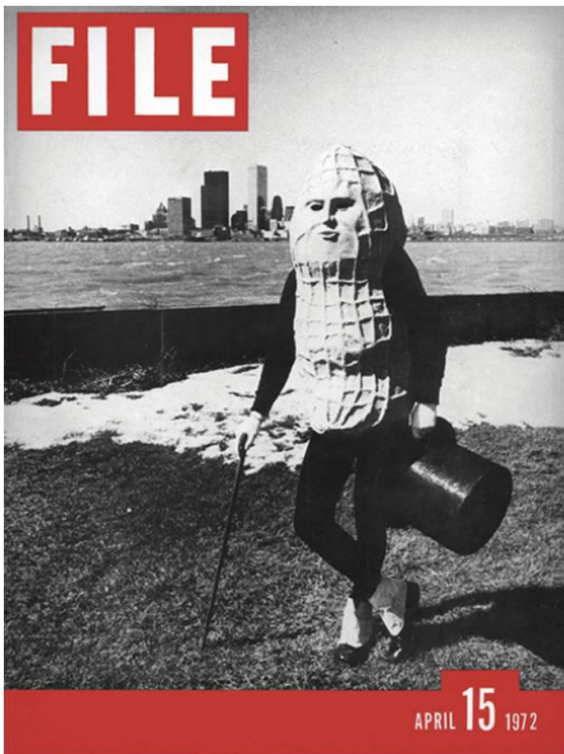


Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

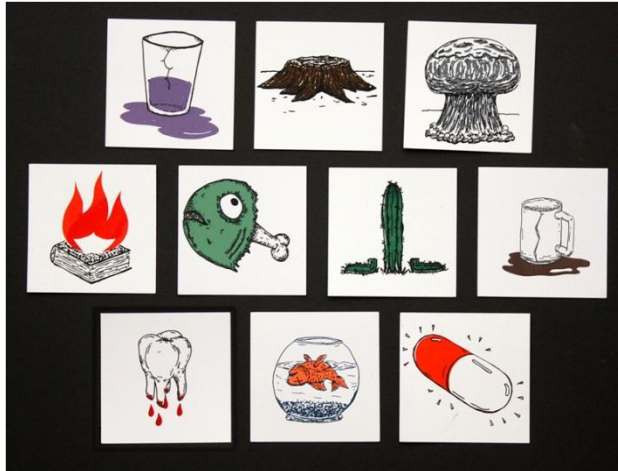


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 14



Figure 13



Figure 15





Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21

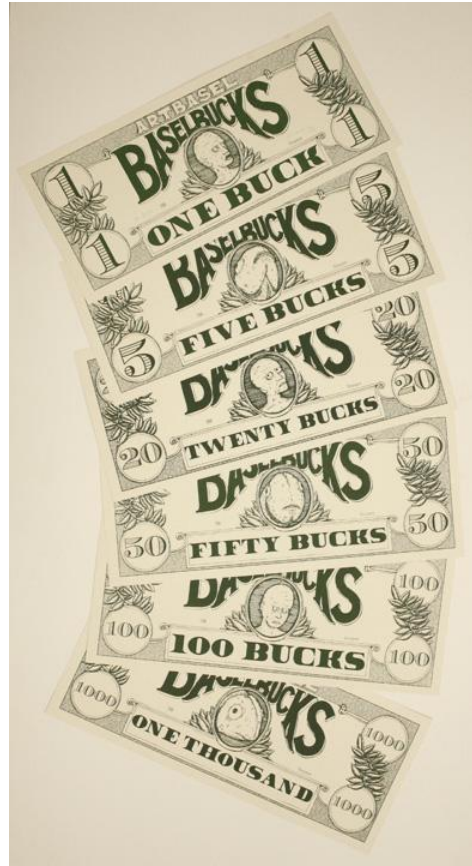


Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25





Figure 26



Figure 27

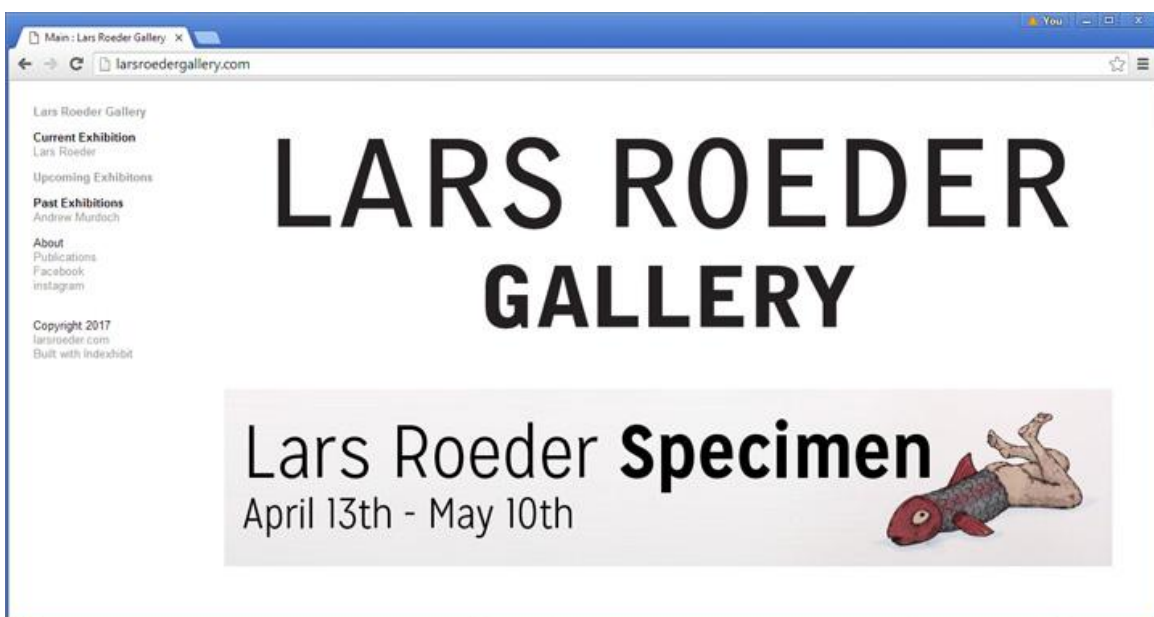


Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30





Figure 31



Figure 33

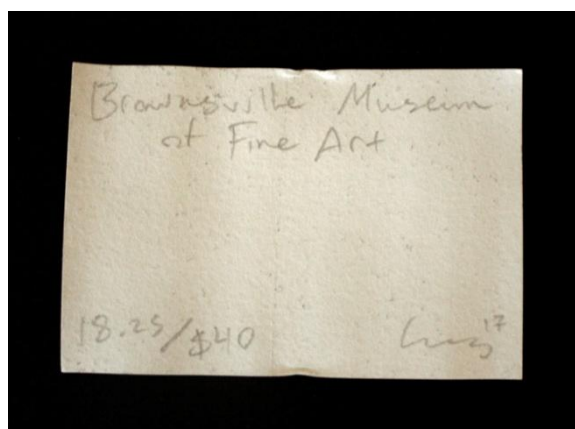


Figure 34



Figure 32



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 38



Figure 37



Figure 39



Figure 40





Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 52



Figure 53



Figure 54

## Appendix A – Voter Registration form



<b>1. Check Boxes that Apply:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> New Voter Registration <input type="checkbox"/> Address Change <input type="checkbox"/> Party Change <input type="checkbox"/> Name Change		
<b>2.</b> I am a U.S. Citizen. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No I am at least 16 years of age. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (You must be at least 18 years of age to vote.)  If you checked NO to either of these statements, do not complete this form.		
<b>3. Driver's license or ID Number:</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; vertical-align: middle;"></span>  If you do not have a driver's license or ID, enter last 4 digits of your social security number: <span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 80px; height: 20px; vertical-align: middle;"></span> <b>If you do not enter either number, see instructions for Box 3.</b>		
<b>4. Last Name</b> _____ <b>Suffix (if any)</b> _____	<b>First Name</b> _____ <b>Middle Name (or initial)</b> _____	
<b>5. Home Address (Do not enter a post office box)</b> _____	<b>Apt.</b> _____ <b>City/Town</b> _____ <b>State</b> _____ <b>ZIP Code</b> _____	
<b>6. Mailing Address (If different from Box 5)</b> _____	<b>Apt.</b> _____ <b>City/Town</b> _____ <b>State</b> _____ <b>ZIP Code</b> _____	
<b>7. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>Month</span> <span>Day</span> <span>Year</span> </div>	<b>8. Phone No./ E-mail Address (optional)</b> _____	<b>9. Party Affiliation:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Surrealist <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract Expressionist <input type="checkbox"/> Impressionist <input type="checkbox"/> Unaffiliated <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>10. I swear or affirm that:</b> - I am not incarcerated in a correctional facility upon a felony conviction. - I am not presently judged "mentally incompetent" to vote by a court of law. - The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I may be fined, imprisoned, or (if not a U.S. citizen) deported from or refused entry into the United States.		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; min-height: 100px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 0;"><b>PLEASE SIGN FULL NAME OR PLACE MARK BELOW</b></p> </div>		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="width: 60%;"> <b>Warning:</b> If you sign this form and know it to be false, you can be convicted and fined up to \$5,000 or jailed up to 10 years.         </div> <div style="width: 35%; text-align: right;"> <b>Are you interested in working at the polls?</b>            (check box below)  <input type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>		
<b>11. PREVIOUS NAME</b> (if different from Box 4) _____	<b>12. PREVIOUS ADDRESS OF REGISTRATION</b> (City/Town, State, ZIP & County) _____	



## Appendix B – Code For *Untitled (support for art)*

```
/*
  Lars Roeder
  Program code for "Untitled (support for art)", a piece exhibited in "Comedy
of Purposes"
  MFA Thesis Exhibition
  Written with assistance from Louis Katz
  This program is freeware
  Uses Anduino Uno and HBridge DRV 8833
  each are powered off seperate 9v battery packs
  2 motors
  motors have a max voltage of ~6v,
  Pins 3,5,6,9
  left motor is H bridge A
  right motor is H bridge B
  stdby-pin8,gnd-gnd
  sonar sensor
  Pins 11,12,5v,gnd
  PIR motion detector
  Pins 7,5v,gnd
*/

unsigned long Distance;           //distance in cm for sonar
int Motion = LOW;                 //integer for motion detector, initially low
int PIRpin = 7;                  //pin for motion detector
int Trigger = 11;                //trigger pin for sonar
int Echo = 12;                   //echo pin for sonar
int AIN1 = 3;                    //HBRIDGE AIN plugs into this PWM pin, etc.
int AIN2 = 5;
int BIN1 = 6;
int BIN2 = 9;
int stdby = 8;
int FastR = 150;
int FastL = 150;                 //Fastest we can go without burning out motor
int Slow = 60;                   //slow speed for motors
int Off = 0;                     //set pins low
int SDelay = 50;                 //short delay, used in PIR setup and sonar
reading
int MDelay = 500;                //medium delay, used to back up at end of loop
int LDelay = 2000;               //long delay, used to rest at end of loop
int Far = 450;                   //maximum distance for sonar in cm
int Near = 50;                   //range for sonar detection of objects in its
path
int Drive;                       //integer for escape loop
int Reps = 8;                    //number of repetitions of escape loop
int SetDelay = 10000;            //time in setup before PIR starts sensing

void setup() {
  pinMode(PIRpin, INPUT);
  pinMode(Trigger, OUTPUT);
  pinMode(Echo, INPUT);
  pinMode(AIN1, OUTPUT);
  pinMode(AIN2, OUTPUT);
  pinMode(BIN1, OUTPUT);
  pinMode(BIN2, OUTPUT);
```

```

pinMode(stdby, OUTPUT);
digitalWrite(stdby, HIGH);
Serial.begin(9600);
Serial.println("hello world");
delay(SetDelay);
Serial.println("sensing now");
}

void loop() {
  Motion = LOW;
  delay(SDelay);
  Motion = digitalRead(PIRpin);
  if(Motion == HIGH){                                     //motion sense
    Serial.println("person detected");
    Motion = LOW;
    for(Drive=0;Drive<Reps;Drive++){
      Distance = Sonar();                                 //sonar check

      if(Distance > Near){                                //clear, fwd
        Serial.println(Distance);
        for(Distance=Far;Distance>Near;Distance--){
          Forward();
          delay(SDelay);
          Distance = Sonar();
          Serial.println(Distance);
        }
        Serial.println("STOPPING");
        Stop();
        Lturn();
        delay(200*random(10));
        Stop();
        Serial.println("tryin diff direction");
      }
    }
  }
  else{
    Rturn();
    delay(200*random(10));
    Stop();
  }
}
Serial.println("I got away");
ReverseSlow();
delay(MDelay);
}
Serial.println("I'm safe now");
Stop();
delay(LDelay);
}

//custom mvmt functions
void Reverse(){
  analogWrite(AIN1, FastL);
  analogWrite(AIN2, Off);
  analogWrite(BIN1, FastR);
  analogWrite(BIN2, Off);
  return;
}
void ReverseSlow(){

```



```

    analogWrite(AIN1, Slow);
    analogWrite(AIN2, Off);
    analogWrite(BIN1, Slow);
    analogWrite(BIN2, Off);
    return;
}
void Forward(){
    analogWrite(AIN2, FastL);
    analogWrite(AIN1, Off);
    analogWrite(BIN2, FastR);
    analogWrite(BIN1, Off);
    return;
}
void Lturn(){
    analogWrite(AIN1, FastL);
    analogWrite(AIN2, Off);
    analogWrite(BIN2, FastR);
    analogWrite(BIN1, Off);
    return;
}
void Rturn(){
    analogWrite(AIN2, FastL);
    analogWrite(AIN1, Off);
    analogWrite(BIN1, FastR);
    analogWrite(BIN2, Off);
    return;
}
void Stop(){
    analogWrite(AIN1, Off);
    analogWrite(AIN2, Off);
    analogWrite(BIN1, Off);
    analogWrite(BIN2, Off);
    return;
}

//Sonar Function
unsigned long Sonar(){
    digitalWrite(Triiger,LOW);
    delay(5);
    digitalWrite(Triiger,HIGH);
    delay(5);
    digitalWrite(Triiger,LOW);
    unsigned long sensor = pulseIn(Echo,HIGH);
    return sensor*.034/2;
}

```

## Appendix C – Pamphlet for Exhibition

### Front:

*Comedy of Purposes* is a collection of interactive installations and performances which have been executed across the country over the last year. They critique notions of convenience, agency and value while cultivating a renewed sense of presence in the viewer. The exhibition includes documentation and artifacts from the original executions of the pieces, displaying the breadth of their concept while creating a dynamic and insightful experience in their amalgam.

Prices for the objects and artifacts will be made available upon request.

The photographs in this exhibition can be purchased for \$20 each.

All performance photographs are credited to Payton Koranek

[www.larsroeder.com](http://www.larsroeder.com)

# Lars Roeder

## Comedy of Purposes


April 7th - 15th, 2017

### ISLANDER GALLERY

Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi  
Hamlin Shopping Center, 4024 Weber Road

Gallery Hours: Monday - Sunday, 12:00 - 6:00 pm  
Opening Reception: Thursday, April 13th, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

The artist would like to thank the faculty, staff and students of Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi and the School of Arts, Media & Communication; special thanks to Professors Ryan O'Malley, Louis Katz, Joe Peña and Department Chair Rich Gere; and thanks to Dr. Laura Petican, Mr. Kevin Mercer and the University Galleries for making this exhibition a reality.



### Back:

**1** *Polling Place* is an interactive installation and performance exhibited from October 7th to November 4th, 2016, in the Schaudies Gallery at K Space Contemporary, Corpus Christi, Texas, as part of the 'HUUUGE! - Outrageous Acts of Politics' art exhibition and from November 3rd to November 29th, 2016, at the Art Gym, Denver, Colorado, as part of the 'Political BS' art exhibition.

In this piece, participants first complete the voter registration form, then proceed to the voting booth and follow the directions to select the candidate they wish to vote for. They then may place their ballot in the ballot box, completing the process. The piece appropriates the democratic process to critique the artistic process. It ascribes the participant with the power to judge one work over another without providing any supplemental information with which to aid their selection. Don't forget the voting sticker.

Visitors are invited register and participate in the democratic process.

**2** *Art for Interment* is a recurring public performance piece which has been executed on March 7th, 2017, at the McRay Art Museum and San Antonio Museum of Art in San Antonio, Texas; March 18th, 2017, at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art in Brownsville, Texas; and March 28th, 2017, at the South Texas Museum of Art in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Museums have an interesting role in society. Objectively, they are amalgamated time capsules spanning hundreds to thousands of years and often across the entire globe. They represent what is most valued from the past. Museums also have an interesting impact on the art they care for. The art is effectively curated out of society and into eternity. It is the end of one life and the start of another. *Art for Interment* is art made for eternal isolated existence. When it is buried on the grounds of the museum, it symbolically joins the collection in solitude.

**3** The *Lars Roeder Gallery* is a fully-functional art gallery, collaborative performance, and social experiment which launched on March 8th, 2017 and exists primarily online at [larsroedergallery.com](http://larsroedergallery.com)

The *Lars Roeder Gallery* is sincerely dedicated to promoting emerging artists by curating exhibitions with efficient and impactful tactics. The gallery fully utilizes the tools of the internet to expand patron outreach to a global scale, yet it is dedicated to offering a professional and prestigious venue. Depending on the perspective of one's encounter, there is a unique perception of what is real, what is an illusion and what is disregarded.

**4** *Piece for Juried Shows* is an interactive installation that was accepted to the '45th International Art Show' at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art in Brownsville, Texas, from March 22nd to April 5th, 2017.

For contemporary artist practice, the juried show is a critical institution. It functions as a benchmark of measured success against fellow practicing artists. Yet it is an antiquated model. The modes for 'impartial judging' favor art that photographs well and neglects the true objectivity of a work. Further, the monetary aspect of the process, artists paying a fee simply for the opportunity to be judged into the show, leaves a door open for exploitation. For the viewer, the diversity stemming from having so many different artists' work often distracts from fully engaging with the art. *Piece for Juried Shows* is designed to provide the viewer with a physical interaction, and recoup the cost of the fee a quarter at a time.

Visitors are invited to try to collect all four.

**5** *BaselBucks* is an interactive performance which occurred on December 2nd and 3rd, 2016, at Edge Zones and various other locations around Miami, Florida, on the occasion of Art Basel - Miami Beach.

*BaselBucks* critiques the value associated with the exchange of art, set in one of the world's most expansive and expensive arenas, Art Basel - Miami Beach. This piece offers both an accessibility and exclusivity to the buyer. If they can only afford a one-dollar print, there is a "one dollar print". If they would like a twenty-dollar print there is a "twenty dollar print". For those looking to flex their capitalistic prowess and desire exclusivity, there is only one \$1000 print. There is peace of mind in knowing how a work of art is assigned its value.

Visitors are invited to exchange their own US dollars for fabulous *BaselBucks*.

**6** *Art-corrupted Literature* is an interactive artist's book which was exhibited from January 21st to February 26th, 2017, at The Lion's Nest in Austin, Texas, on the occasion of Print Austin 2017.

*Art-corrupted Literature* uses a combative action with an intimate object to represent decay and change through participation. It is both aggressive and delicate. The act of tearing out pages, removing information, hoarding knowledge, destroying an object through its purpose, makes the impact of the participant on those who follow much more visceral. Now in 'Comedy of Purposes', the detriment is fully realized as there are no pages left. All subsequent participants have missed their chance.

**7** *Whatever* is a recurring public performance which has been executed on March 4th, April 1st, May 6th, and September 2nd, 2016, at the First Friday Art Walk in Corpus Christi, Texas, and February 11th, 2017, at the PrintAustin Print Expo in Austin, Texas, for durations ranging from ten minutes to four hours.

The *Whatever* cart is used to share low-cost art to a larger volume of people. Intrigued pedestrians are solicited to purchase 'whatever' from the \$1 value menu. After some inconclusive banter their curiosity outweighs their frugality. It is only a dollar after all, and no customer leaves unsatisfied. Sometimes the comfort of recognition helps to start the conversation.

Visitors are invited to purchase a box from the cart for \$1.


**8** *Untitled (Support for art)* is an interactive sculpture created for the exhibition 'Comedy of Purposes' at the Islander Gallery in Corpus Christi, Texas, April 7th to April 15th, 2017.

The pedestal can have a profound effect on the way a work of art is interpreted. The viewing height in relation to the viewer, the platform size in relation to the work, and the color of the structure all can have dramatic effects on how a piece is read. This works on a subconscious level. Conversely, a viewer can rely on the label for instructions on how they may interpret a work. The title, year, media, while no doubt important, can provoke unintended significance in the viewer and alter their perception. Thus the pedestal and label may themselves be treated as art objects.

Supplemental audio tours are available near the entrance to the gallery. There is a \$5 suggested donation. Audio tours may be returned to the gift shop at the conclusion of your visit.

When available, the Island Cafe offers a variety of treats prepared fresh before your eyes.

Please enjoy the gift shop as you exit the gallery. Take home a piece of the exhibition to commemorate your experience.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle. "Poetics. In *Introduction to Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 668-713. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods. Dijon: Les Presses du Reel, 1998.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. 1981. Reprint, Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.
- Banksy. *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. United Kingdom: Paranoid Pictures, 2010. DVD.
- Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. 1936. Reprint, Scottsdale, AZ: Prism Key Press, 2010.
- Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*. 1934. Reprint, New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 2005.
- Dunne, Carey. "What Happens When A Museum Gives Art Away For Free?" *Hyperallergic*. October 4, 2016. <https://hyperallergic.com/323417/>.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Open Work*. 1962. Reprint, Translated by Anna Cancogni. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Ernst, Wolfgang. *Digital Memory and the Archive*. Edited by Jussi Parikka. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Higgins, Dick. "Intermedia." *Leonardo* vol. 34, no. 1, Feb 2001, 49-54. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/19618>
- Hirsch, Ann. "Why Reality TV?" Presentation at the Panoply Conference, Vaudeville Park, Brooklyn, NY, November 11th, 2011. <https://vimeo.com/33741319>.
- Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. 1944., Edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 2002.
- Hunt, Elle. "Pair of Glasses Left on US Gallery Floor Mistaken as Art." *The Guardian*. May 27, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/may/27/pair-of-glasses-left-on-us-gallery-floor-mistaken-for-art>.
- Johnson, Paddy. "Miami Art Fairs: Final Thoughts and Reflections." *Art F City*. December 6, 2016. <http://artfcity.com/2016/12/06/the-miami-art-fairs-final-thoughts-and-reflections/>.

Jones, Jonathan. "Modern art is rubbish? Why mistaking artworks for trash proves their worth." *The Guardian*. October 27, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/global/shortcuts/2015/oct/27/modern-art-is-rubbish-why-mistaking-artworks-for-trash-proves-their-worth>.

Jonquet, François. *Gilbert and George: Intimate Conversations with François Jonquet*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004.

Kinsella, Eileen and Sarah Cascone, "Art Basel in Miami Beach Parties You'll Never Get Into, 2016 Edition." *Artnet News*. November 28, 2016. <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/most-exclusive-miami-basel-parties-226411>.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. 1867. Reprint, Edited by Frederick Engels. Translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. New York: Random House, Inc., 1906.

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. 1964. Reprint, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994.

Smith, Sarah E.K. *General Idea: Life and Work*. Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2016. <https://www.aci-iac.ca/>.

Weschler, Lawrence. *Boggs: A Comedy of Values*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999.