2009

Lilliput

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Greetings from LILLIPUT

tiny art for big people
John Avelluto  Jun Ishida  Adina J. Raviv
Steven J. Backman  Courtney Johnson  Saraivy Orench Reinat
Billybob Beamer  Kenneth Kaplowitz  Steve Rossi
Shannon Bellum  Hiroshi Kumagai  Naz Shahrokh
Thomas Farhad Both  Kevin Laverty  Michael Thompson
Mary Bowman-Cline  Michelle Levante  Rachel Timmins
Marina Camargo  Christine Lewis  Allie Avital Tsypin
Michael Drummond  Rachel Leibman  Deborah Ugoretz
Daniel Fenelon  Maria Lupo  Elijah Van Benschoten
Raymond Gaddy  Raymond Materson  Raymond F. Waters
Chris George  Narciso Montero  Florence Weisz
John Goodyear  Alexandra Pacula  Heather Willems
Brian Gustafson  Boris Petropavlovsky  Josh Willis
Tracy Heneberger  & Anna-Alisa Belous  Polina Zaitseva
Ryan Higgins  Sarah Petruziello
Oscar I. Hyde  James Prez
When we began organizing “Lilliput” in the spring of 2007 for its first incarnation, our initial concept was in reaction to the explosion of small works shows at that time. In our opinion, most of those exhibitions were highlighting works we considered to be “mid-sized,” as the galleries were soliciting and showing artwork in the 16 to 30 inch range. In our collective sarcasm, we decided to really push the point home with a show of absurdly small works in response. Thus “Lilliput” was conceived as a riposte to this ongoing market trend in the arts. Despite our initially flippant motivation for “Lilliput” it soon became apparent to us that as curators, we were tapping into some rather significant contemporary modalities in galleries and museums.

Aside from the issue of scale, we are capitalizing on the industry’s current fondness for exhibitions that rely on audience participation in order to put forth meaning. Prestigious institutions such as The Detroit Institute of the Arts and The Smithsonian recently embarked on initiatives to incorporate interactive components into exhibition spaces. Art Interactive in Cambridge, Massachusetts is a space dedicated to “unparalleled opportunities for experiencing innovative art forms (where) visitors play, create, and participate.” Locally, The Chelsea Art Museum is but one of many institutions that has also embraced interactive strategies for visitors in its exhibitions. While “Lilliput” does not necessarily require manipulation of components within the artwork by visitors, it is indeed interactive in the sense that audiences need to engage in active looking, being supplied with magnifying glasses upon entry to the gallery. When used by visitors, the magnifying glasses reveal details of the artwork that
cannot be seen with the un-aided eye. In this sense, “Lilliput” incorporates interactivity by introducing a performative aspect to the exhibition.

This performative aspect also taps into art historical investigations regarding the ritualistic characteristics critic Carol Duncan wrote about in *Civilizing Rituals*, which is recognized as one of the most salient books on the topic. In her publication, she compares museums to ceremonial monuments, such as palaces or temples, in which visitors enact roles in navigating exhibitions, viewing artwork and making meaning. As curators, we drive home the point of enacting ritual by asking viewers to employ the use of a magnifying glass, looking for miniscule artwork in a large space and purposely installing the work in spots where it may be obscured. Visitors are required to crouch, kneel, tippy-toe and search. In this way, we place the visitor in the role of an explorer, embarking upon the ritual of finding and ultimately, seeing.

“Lilliput” also touches upon the phenomenon of transparent curatorial practice. To that end, we are exposing to audiences how much the physical space of the gallery and curatorial choices influence their interaction with the art. Since the artwork in this exhibition is no larger than 1.5 inches in any direction, viewers, upon entry, will initially be confronted with a seemingly empty 2,100 square foot gallery. The works of art are intentionally dwarfed by the large, open white cube space of The Walsh Gallery. The artwork gradually begins to appear as viewer’s perceptions adjust to the small scale of the work conflated against such a large space. Additionally, our choice to install the work at
unusual heights and near architectural elements draws attention to the fact that both curators and visitors are liminally accustomed to finding artwork installed at a convenient height for viewing, although this is a canon to which we rarely give thought.

Despite all the theory-laden jargon, we see “Lilliput” ultimately as a fun way to view the art. Upon unveiling the show in August of 2007, we were gratified to see visitors laughing and strangers pointing out overlooked works of art to one another. Artists also noted their delight in having to create on such a small scale, moving them to re-consider their practice. Overall, it is our intention that visitors will leave the gallery with a smile on their faces, proving that art doesn’t always have to be so serious.

Asha Ganpat and Jeanne Brasile

**Duncan, Carol Civilizing Rituals (New York: Routledge, 1995) 7 - 20
John Avelluto

Untitled
Acrylic paint  2007
Miniature Empire State Building
Toothpick and glue, 2008
Cross Trees
Graphite on board, 2009
Shannon Bellum

We Were Too Late
Paper and wax, 2007
Thomas Farhad Both

Inner
Matboard and light, 2009
Mary Bowman-Cline

Giant Lemon
Oil on wood, 2008
Michael Drummond

Lumberjack
Toothpick and paint, 2002
Daniel Fenelon

Symbiosical
Watercolor and pen and ink, 2009
Raymond Gaddy

The Echo
Oil on parchment, 2009
Chris George

Nothing Bird
Laser print, 2007
John Goodyear

Angels at the Point of a Pin
Photocopy of a pin enlarged 1000x mounted on wood, 2009
Brian Gustafson

It’s the Little Things That Count
Mirror, hand-blown glass, plastic, Jack Daniel's whiskey, 2007
Tracy Heneberger

Mane
Octopus, epoxy, shellac, 2009
Ryan Higgins

Illusory Cube
Glass, 2007
Courtney Johnson

Nosferatu
Blood on glass, 2007
Kenneth Kaplowitz

Building Tower of Babel
Pigment print, 2008
Hiroshi Kumagai

Wall Candy
Vinyl on plexi, 2008
Kevin Laverty

Micro-Environment #2
Acrylic paint, wood, plastic, 2009
Michelle Levante

Microscopic Love
Still from time-lapse video, 2007
Christine Lewis

Snail Shell Cottage
Snail shell, balsa wood, 2009
Rachel Leibman

Holy Book #2
Collage from ancient manuscript images, 2009
Maria Lupo

Pig in the News
Mixed media, 2009
Raymond Materson

Wanted: A Sane Solution
Embroidery nylon sock thread on cotton, 2009
Narciso Montero

Actual Size
Vinyl, 2009
Alexandra Pacula

Goblet 2
Oil on board, 2009
Boris Petropavlovsky
& Anna-Alisa Belous

Us and Them
Wood, paper, acrylic, video camera, microphone, LCD screen, speaker, light fixture, wire, 2009
Sarah Petruziello

Baby Tooth II
Graphite on illustration board, 2009
James Prez

Elvis Cube

Parts of book pages, rabbit glue, photo stickers, wood cube, packaging tube, 2009
An Old Tale of an Apple
Wood and 14k gold leaf, 2009
Saraivy Orench Reinat

Square Drop
Urethane on wood, 2007
Steve Rossi

Chewing Gum Camo II
Chewing gum, acetate, epoxy resin, 2009
Naz Shahrokh

Leaf Horizon (Iran)
Watercolor, housepaint, gesso on sage maple leaf, 2009
Michael Thompson

Commemorating Greed
Stamp, 2009
Rachel Timmins

Operation Disease Control
Sterling silver, suture line, 2008
Allie Avital Tsypin

Little Did You Know (Living Room with Ants)
Mixed media, 2009
Deborah Ugoretz

Ruined Cities #2
Cut paper, gold leaf and acrylic paint, 2009
Elijah Van Benschotenen

November 1st
Charcoal on paper, 2009
Raymond F. Waters

A Small Prayer for Peace
Glass vial, rubber, earth, paper, 2009
Florence Weisz

Obamart Flag
Digital collage print, 2009
Help Wanted

Heather Willems

Paper and ink, 2007
Josh Willis

Bonsai 2
Oil on museum board, 2009
Polina Zaitseva

Red Light District
Bug, paint, LED lights, 2007
The Walsh Gallery extends its gratitude to those who made this exhibition possible:

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