

To something else

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Preface

I am most interested in project art when it has taken the art discourse and pushed it to the point of disappearance. This motion can easily land an artist into a place where a value structure other than that of the art world best explains what the artist is doing. In light of that phenomenon, I have asked my students to write descriptions of something that they consider to not be art; these descriptions are what follows.

Ben Kinmont
San Francisco
December 2006

Introduction

The students considered what is lost when something is called art. Previous texts written in this class framed various occurrences, circumstances, or interactions (pre-existing or created) as art. This raised questions about what constitutes art and where art disappears in the attempt to define it. As a continuation of the discussion, the students decided to identify and write a statement about something that they viewed as not art. These texts were not written as art but as statements identifying something that falls outside of art experienced by each individual student.

In writing these statements some of the students found it easier to identify something relating to them in the first person as not art rather than an occurrence or an idea relating to someone else. Identifying something that is not art helped to define and determine each individual's own art practice.

Breean Cox and Melissa Wyman
San Francisco
December 2006

Natalie Aguilar

The Breyer horse works directly with the community to involve them in the participation of social exchange. The Breyer experience includes the act of obtaining a model horse through trade, bidding, or purchase. However you cannot simply go to any store to purchase a Breyer. After extensive research an individual chooses a seller. It is then that one sets about deciding the particular model of horse they desire to acquire. There are different colors, models, breeds and rare special editions.

The ultimate Breyer encounter is to attend Breyer Fest usually held in Kentucky. It is there that social exchange of the maker, buyer and seller mingle. It is a three-day event focused around showing, competition and buying the model horse. This is also one of the main ways to get your name recognized as a Breyer collector. The Breyer horse is not just a toy here. It is an embodiment of childhood in the form of a horse that can be shared and displayed for hundreds. The verbal interaction that occurs is priceless and the special edition Breyer Fest Model is irreplaceable.



Breean Cox

We showed up towards the end of the set, there was an empty table in the corner. I sat down with my back to the wall. Sarah sat across from me. The band was on break, so Safa came and sat down next to Sarah. We chatted for a minute. An older man with a Russian accent leaned over Safa's shoulder; he asked if he could get a drink for any of us. I assumed he was a friend of Safa's or someone Sarah had met there before. I said, "yeah, sure, if you want." I had no money and a glass of wine sounded nice. When the man came back Safa stood up to go start another set. Sarah went to "powder her nose". Melissa's friend that I hadn't yet been introduced to sat down across from me. The man sat directly to my left. He set the glass of wine on the table in front of me, and slipped his hand up the inside of my thigh. I grabbed his hand and said, "No, that is not going to happen, it's not okay." He laughed and slurred, "oh I'm sorry, I'm so drunk." I suddenly realized this man was a stranger. I took a sip of wine, trying to shake off my disgust. I set my glass down and the man leaned over, grabbed my shoulder and kissed my neck. I pushed him away and glaringly yelled, "stop that!" Sarah reappeared from the bathroom and sat down across from me. I scooted my chair away from him and tried to ignore his presence. I started talking to Melissa's friend, who kept shifting her eyes back and forth between the man and myself. The man leaned over and kissed my neck. I sat there gapping. Melissa's friend leaned forward and said, "Do you know this guy?" I shook my head. I turned towards Sarah trying to figure out what to do about the situation. The man rested his arm across the back of my chair; I felt my skin begin to crawl. He let his arm fall across my back. I jumped up and said, "That's it! Take your fucking drink back." I walked to the front of the bar where the band was warming up. Sarah showed up in a second. I said, "I don't know what to do about that guy, he's freaking me out." Melissa appears and asks what happened. I plead: "this creepy old guy won't stop trying to molest me, I don't know what to do." Melissa said: "I'll take care of it." I'm left alone for a minute. Sarah returns and tells me it's okay, that he's gone. About half an hour later Sarah turns to me, "I had David Starlight throw the guy out, he was trying to molest another girl over there." The tight ball in my stomach began to unravel.

Travis Meinolf

I offered to help an older man and woman trying to negotiate a chest of drawers onto the back of a pick-up truck. They refused, saying that they had it under control.

Lauren Parent

It's 5:30 am and I hear my cat jump off the bed. She races up and down the hallway until my partner gets up and feds her. I fall back asleep and dream the usual dream about my father. At 6:50 the alarm goes off and I hit snooze. 7:00, 7:05, 7:10...I climb out of bed and find my slippers. I shuffle down the hallway to turn on the coffee pot. I head into the freezing bathroom, turn on the shower, and reluctantly peel of my t-shirt. It's 7:15 and I have just woken up in the morning.

Elise Pepple

My parents came into town. They were very happy to see me. I was very difficult to be around and am in fact embarrassed to admit that something close to a temper tantrum arose. We spent the majority of our time talking about what I should do with my life. This is nothing new. They made no plans for me. This is new. They said nice things. This was enough to make me sheepish and then ask later "so what should I do?" This was neither new nor very interesting. They told me to talk to the director of my program and explain my concerns. The next day I met with the director of my program. I told him I had certain concerns. At the end of the conversation he said, "I don't feel like we've gotten anywhere." I paused, thought for a moment, and added "I don't think we've gotten anywhere either." With this sense of agreement we both left the table.

Jen Rhoads

A neighbor asked if I was available Saturday night for a few hours to baby-sit her 2 yr. old child for a few hours. I was available and told her so. I arrived at her apartment at 8pm and asked about some specifics regarding child care. After she and her partner left for the evening, I watched "Shopgirl" which was a creepy movie with Steve Martin. Then, I read this week's New Yorker for a while. At around midnight, the child began to ask for "MOMMY!" and I did my best to comfort him until his parents came home about 20 minutes later.

Sara Thacher

“Well . . . I took a crap not too long ago,” my partner responded. “I realize that there might be people out there who would call that art, but I don’t.”

Melissa Wyman

I have a headache; I just took a Tylenol and am about to go back to bed.



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