

Secondary Object  
Mikkel Carl,  
Natalie Dray,  
Aymeric Tarrade  
David Dale Gallery  
11.06 - 16.07.16

// Great!

Hello everyone,  
Thanks for agreeing to take part.  
Let's see how this goes.

*James Lee* Hi everyone, hope you are all good. I think we'll start in 15, if that's cool?

*Mikkel Carl* Fine

// The plan is we'll just keep it text based to avoid any connection problems. I'll do an introduction, and begin with a question to Max. Hopefully it will all flow, but I have some questions to ask to all of you too. This is a bit of an experiment- let's see how it goes!

*Max Slaven* Cool, I'm here and ready

*Aymeric Tarrade* Hi, I'm there too

*Natalie Dray* Hi, I'm here too

Im going to start by maybe asking Max a question, and take it from there.

Max, who has curated this show, wanted to have the direct engagement of yourselves in terms of how your ideas are presented to an audience. This Q and A can hopefully help with that, in terms of being available to the audience at David Dale Gallery in printed form. I suppose this is a smart move as it gives you as artists a chance to 'call back', to respond, to how your work is being framed and interpreted for an audience. This is your chance to either challenge or develop ideas related to how the exhibition has been curated.

Q.) Firstly, to Max, you have framed the show in a certain way. I'm wondering if you could elaborate on your thinking behind bringing together these artists and artworks, under the title of the exhibition 'Secondary Object'?

*MS* The initial thought behind the exhibition comes from a long standing interest I've had in how audiences now engage with Contemporary Art, and the venues/ structures in which they're displayed - and how digital media, or the internet, either enhances or gets in the way of this engagement - or both.

In choosing the artists and their work, I was interested in how developing from a feasibly Minimalist vernacular, the artists' work relied on engagement, structures and sensation to be completed - as opposed to the traditional autonomous object of say Judd's Minimalism.

*JL* I think that's great. I'll develop on both of those strands here.

*MS* The secondary aspect aims to expand on both this reliance on external influences, and the life of artworks when only consumed through documentation - through fixed viewpoints. This part comes from considering the documentation of ephemeral works from like the 70s, and the photos and papers that then become the work - secondary documents.

Sorry, that's me done

*JL* I feel we may have to type at the end of each part, something like 'Roger out' to communicate we have finished!

Following on from this, I will ask a question to all to begin

Q.) Much contemporary art is experienced via digital screens, perhaps even more so than printed media now like periodicals, say. Blogs and micro-blogging sites connect artists and audiences. How do you feel – making the work you do as an artist- that this is how many people will first encounter your work? This is I suppose, a question to all.

I'm thinking maybe along the lines of.... Do you feel making the work you do is a resistance or challenge to the temptation to make work that looks great on Instagram? To what extent is it considered? And is 'entrance' to artworks via these micro-blogging sites a bad thing necessarily?

*AT* Yes, blogs allow me to not only access a wide range of current exhibitions around the world, but also archives. It is very interesting in the dynamic it creates. It allows you to look

at exhibitions that we can't physically attend. Even if it can't replace the experience we have within a real exhibition, it gives an idea of what is going on. It's better than nothing.

Also I don't consider a social media communication as part of my work. I don't have instagram...

*MC* I think a lot about this, not so much when I'm producing the works, but very much so when I document them: Installation shot, regular work shot, but also lots of detail shots (something which is often missing from gallery shows where they have to pay an expensive photographer, but with the result that you can't really tell HOW the picture or whatever is really made)...maybe even using a stand in for the audience. Not so much to convey the feeling of actually being there, but rather to "explain" certain aspects of a work, that can be hard to grasp in a photograph; i.e. time sensitive aspects, things moving etc. I actually enjoy this part a lot, because it allows me a unique control of the work, laying out some lines of association that the audience can move along more freely. I think blogs are great. It gives

me a purpose to do things in venues where I know that perhaps not that many people will actually visit IRL. It also provides me with a sense of being part of a larger community and not just a "Danish artist".

*MS* This seems quite prevalent to me, that now a work isn't finished until it's documented – that's its final form and dissemination. These platforms are also important as Mikkel says, as this show wouldn't exist without them - most of us haven't met IRL.

*ND* I have always considered physical space as the site of the work, so I have never given any predominance to social media platforms as being a material of the work. It would be more accurate to say that I share the site of the hardware, which makes-up the computer.

*LL* Would you be able to provide an example of a line of association Mikkel? That's quite an interesting idea. Openly embracing the 'removal' of the viewer from the installation, and trying to make the distant viewer as much part of the experience as possible. A very open gesture. I think it's

particularly interesting in this context, in this exhibition, where in curatorial terms, it seems to be about this relation between physical presence and the art work.

Its interesting this is happening here we have never met! We exist as avatars and profile pictures.

*MC* A short time ago I did this installation, which is basically a lukewarm wall, installing inside a gallery wall the system you would normally use for floor heating. People entering the space may or may not discover this work – the only guide is the title and a wire coming out off the wall. But online this work would be impossible to experience, had I simply taken a picture of the room, so instead I took a picture of someone experiencing the work – the gallery assistant with her hand gently touching the wall. Of course this is staged, but it's also perfectly real.

*JL* In that regard, it is quite interesting to perhaps develop some thoughts on the notion of the 'autonomous' art work here. As Natalie perhaps alluded to.

Q.) Where do you feel work

your works sits as 'autonomous' objects, so that is being de-contextualised from it's setting? There is a famous 'Glaswegian' thought popularised by David Harding and adopted by his students such as Douglas Gordon and David Shrigley, that context is half the work. So that is the setting the artwork is in and how the viewer perceives or engages with the work. Is this idea something you are aware of? How much of your work is in the object, and how does it rely conversely on either a.) the space it is being presented within or b.) the audience interacting with it. Aymeric, I'm maybe thinking of you here.

*MS* I wonder if I can also jump back a second and get Natalie to expand on her idea of the site of the hardware before going onto this next question?

*MC* Yes, I would also love to hear that

*ND* Well, I used to build computers as a hobby whilst I was at the RA, I wanted to remove myself from making my work because I felt distrustful of how to do it rightly -perhaps because most of the conversations I had were held in the context of a crit. I found myself very attracted

to objects that already had an unquestioned function, and yet were hard to understand in terms of their physical nature, such as the architecture of a motherboard.

*AL* That is really fascinating. That reminds me of a point of distinction in contemporary Speculative Realist philosophies. So you have this idea that the object can be understood, it's being understandable to the human mind, and the converse, whereby we can never truly understand an object and it's function - our brains just can't compute, if you pardon the pun.

*AT* To answer the previous question, yes, the context is always important to me. Whenever I think and construct an exhibition, I consider the space as context, and this is a starting point for my practice - where the work will be positioned, and the different elements that will be able to enter into new relationships, creating links that respond to the space. They are going to create an atmosphere. It is also important to think how the spectator will move in the space, and how they will experience the show. But I also think that some works within

the exhibition, as objects, can exist in an autonomous way after the show.

*MC* To me context is more or less what generates the objects. Attention to site – I call my approach “site-sensitive” – is what helps me to choose between the many ideas I have for possible objects and/or interventions. If it's a solo show, I try to match one or several of these ideas to make the most of the context.

*AL* Perhaps I could talk about this approach Mikkel. This constant tension between the experience of a work as a document, and the experience of the work in person. Do you see them as two separate works, the document and the work itself, or is it part of the same object, just viewed from different ways. It seems to change the work a lot, and I like this tension  
With regards to the gallery assistant with her hand against the wall, this is a leap of faith for an online audience to believe... and can be easily missed unless reading a description under an image

I like this tension

*MC* I know this sounds somewhat

metaphysical and extremely non-contemporary, but to me there is sort of an ideal version of the work that I try to realize: First through installing what ever idea I've got in the real (phenomenological) world. And secondly through highlighting certain key aspects of the work through documentation. I guess in that regard you could call Photoshop my ideal tool.

*JL* Do you feel the value in an 'unquestionable function' and the difficulty in understanding how something works are linked perhaps Natalie? Due to something being impenetrable or difficult to understand, this gives something more value? Does this work for your art too? Deliberately difficult - crit like- question for you!

Mikkel, you closet Platonist. I think Aymeric is having a bit of internet trouble, but should be back with us.

*ND* Yes. I wanted to demystify these industrial machines, given that computers are ubiquitous now in society, that they are the backbones of companies that I'm often asked to justify my work in context to, such as Facebook and Instagram. I guess I'm more excited by

the physical acts I can do to re-introduce, or re-connect my body from the digital, so I found myself getting really into computer-customization, and the sub-cultures on the net that share posts on hacking hardware to personalise them. I get bored looking at a screen all day and need to use my hands in other ways, so breaking up the computer seemed like a good way back into making sculpture.

*MC* Ever since Kant there has been "Ding an Sich", and personally I think he was right about the human mind being structurally unable to access this realm. Which is why he left it at that... lol

*JL* I think the Kantian distinction works well, as it opens up avenues to the Sublime - experiencing that which is incomprehensible, we can only experience terror, awe etc. I mean, we'd be all a bit in trouble as artists without the sublime.

I think Max is having some internet trouble too.

I'll follow up with a question to you Mikkel as I know you may have to leave the convo in the next while...

Q.) The show looks at your works as part of, and a distant relation of what may be loosely termed 'Minimalism'. How do you feel you relate to that legacy? I feel, Mikkel, this may be something that you respond to, however, Natalie, I feel you may be more antagonistic to that artistic family or tradition?

*MS* Hey, sorry - our internet is down in the studio. If you guys just continue we'll feed back after offline and circulate text later so everyone can see and amend answers if needed.

*JL* That sounds like a good plan.

Okay, I think I'll start to wrap up now

I'll maybe just get you to expand on the last point Natalie. It would be interesting to get your thoughts on how you feel your work 'works' in the exhibition as a response to minimalism? How it works in that legacy. I'd imagine you may feel quite antagonistic to it?

Also, maybe it would be good if you could expand on the idea of how you feel your work relates to these platforms, such as facebook and instagram

Just one question for Mikkel before he may have to head off:

> The show looks at your works as part of, and a distant relation of what may be loosely termed 'Minimalism'. How do you feel you relate to that legacy? I feel, Mikkel, this may be something that you respond to, however, Natalie, I feel you may be more antagonistic to that artistic family or tradition?

*ND* I'll be back in 10 mins

haha, isn't feeling quite antagonistic to it the tradition of Minimalism, so perhaps I should just agree? !!

I wasn't thinking about Minimalism when making my work for this show, I hadn't realised that's how the show was to be framed.

I just use social media like most people do, as a way to post about things that I'm doing, or share news stories and things I'm thinking about, rather than a medium for Artwork.

*MC* I was on a study trip to Marfa, Texas; the place of the holy Judd grail. And for the first time I had some comprehension

of minimalism – because it was presented on site, i. e. the prairie.

+ the showing of Judd's works was related to his home and his furniture design. You should have seen the children's bedroom, scary stuff. This gave me the idea for a work I realized many years later: GLORIOUS BASTARD, 2013, which is a glory hole added (or subtracted) to a Donald Judd double bed of a most peculiar design; basically two single beds separated by a wall.

And me + U, 2016 (2011) (the title is from a song by Justin Bieber) is directly inspired by Judd's mantra "one thing after another" though I have of course messed it up. The sculpture consists of 7 sheets of clear glass and 14 sheets of mirror glass. They can be put together in a vertical stack of three in seven different ways. But depending on how you place the sculptures, and where,

and in the company of who and what this structural order gives way to infinitude...

good bye all ;)

*ML* Thanks Mikkel

And with that let's perhaps wrap things up there?

I'll circulate this chat to the others whose Internet broke this evening

*MS* We're back, sorry about that - Natalie, it's not necessarily framed by Minimalism, but rather taking it as a starting point to expand on how the objects are engaged with in the various realms... I suppose. Cheers Mikkel, see you soon.

Yeh, thanks guys and sorry again. I'm happy to pull it all together and send round later to re-edit.



