

Small Pleasures

A temporary site-specific and interactive public installation



[PROJECT DESCRIPTION](#)

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: "Small Pleasures" is designed for the facade of the Ulrich Museum of Art (Wichita, KS) in place of Joan Miro's monumental mosaic *Personnages Oiseaux*. Miro's mural is under restoration from 2012 through 2016, which is the duration of this project. The installation consists of a billboard-sized banner covering the facade, a small waterproof display case mounted in the middle of the banner, and two telescopes installed across the street for the viewing of miniature works displayed in the case. Bimonthly, a new item is featured in the 'mini gallery' selected from a pool of submissions.

SELECTION PROCESS: Over the first two years of the project, each bi-monthly selection will be made by a new person (professional artist, art historian, critic, curator, etc). Each 'juror' will be responsible for designating the next. This curatorial approach is designed to be as open and democratic as possible while ensuring quality in the selection process. Featured items will be cataloged on this website along with brief statements from the jurors. Starting in 2015, the project's staff will be responsible for selecting items for display until the last exhibition in mid-2016.

[THE FOLLOWING IS A DIGITAL CATALOG OF EXHIBITIONS](#)

DEC 1, 2016

Mary M. Mazziotti • altered doily

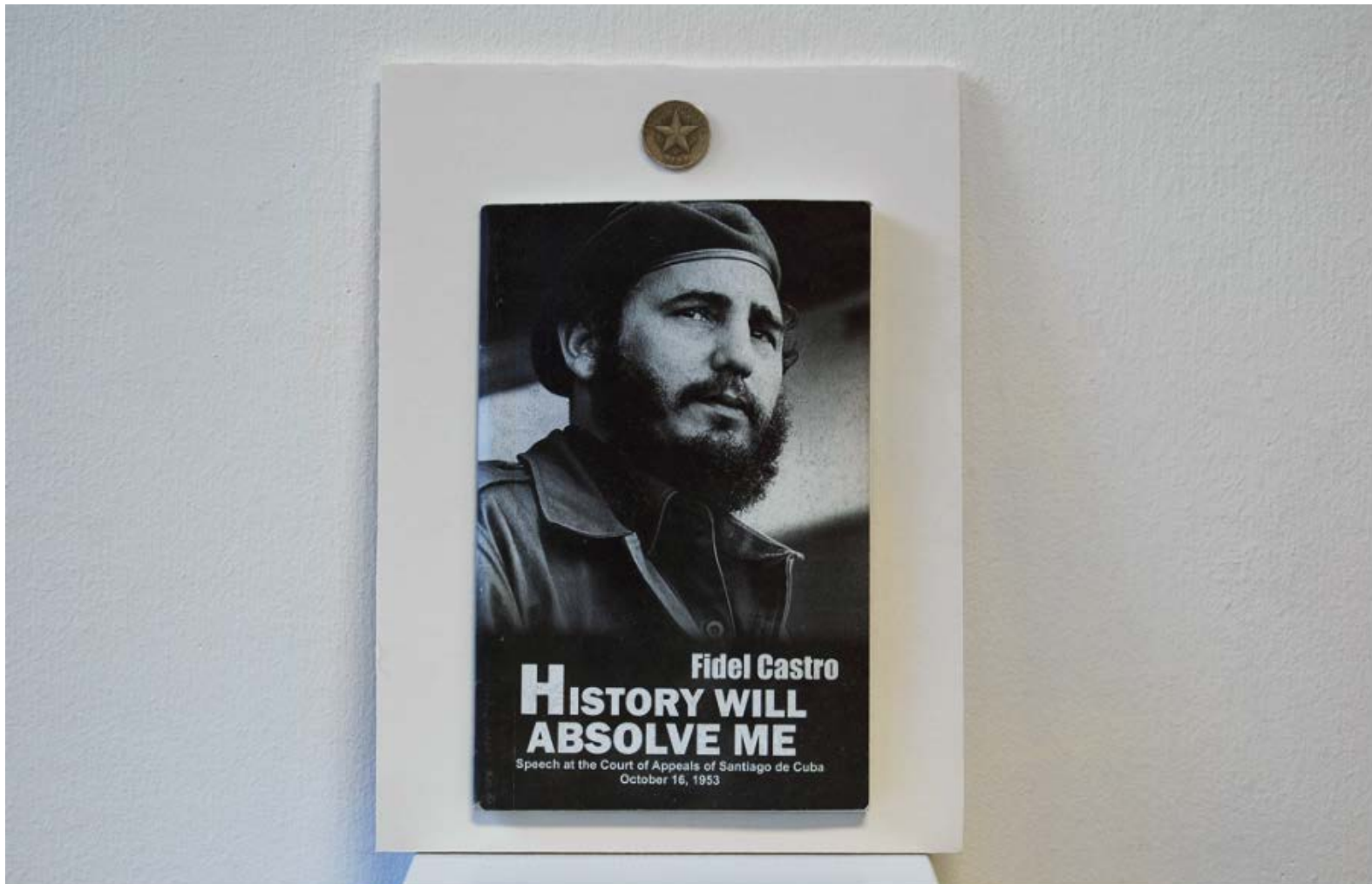
The perfect example of how the slight modification of an ordinary object makes its reading unfold in an unexpected direction. Mazziotti rendered this doily precarious and our experience of it mysterious, almost alarming; an experience aptly defined by the concept of the 'uncanny' – Staff



OCT 1, 2015

Exchange

I received these two items as gifts in exchange for my time while living in Havana over the summer of 2015. An English translation of "History Will Absolve Me," a transcript of a four-hour speech delivered in 1953 by Fidel Castro in his own defense, was given to me in exchange for labor. I received the coin above the book in exchange for my participation in Tino Shegal's socially engaged performance. Shegal's work consisted of a completely empty room with two individuals greeting visitors to solicit their "opinion on market economy." After 10 minutes of discussion, I was given a password with which I was able to collect one Cuban peso (CUP) at the bookstore on my way out. It is important to know that the CUP, sometimes called the "national coin," is one of two official currencies in use, with the other being the convertible peso (CUC). The CUC is the only currency foreigners have access to officially, so receiving as payment the much less 'valuable' CUP represents a true economic exchange. – L



AUG 1, 2015

Counterfeit Nike

This pair of Nike shoes was purchased in Havana, Cuba, in the summer of 2015. Counterfeit products such as this one are common throughout the city's few, small, and very sparsely stocked shops. They speak volumes about the still uneasy relationship between Cuba's economic ideology and the capitalist West. – Staff



APR 1, 2015

Bob the Builder

Museums are complicated organizations that require a balanced approach to exhibition scheduling, fundraising, and community engagement. To celebrate the opportunity that the Ulrich Museum provides WSU's art and design faculty through its faculty biannual, we had a "Bob the Builder" doll on display for the duration of this year's exhibition. The doll was a gift to Ulrich Museum director Bob Workman from the staff of the Amon Carter Museum while he was that institution's associate director. Thank You, Bob!



FEB 1, 2015

Void

In February of 2015, the project received a request for displaying a valuable artwork that required insurance. While it is an honor to have such a request, the project was designed to show works that are experimental in nature and circumvent the official 'art market' with its prized and desirable objects. Due to this fact, *Small Pleasures* went on strike for the months of February and March of 2015. – Staff

Void

DEC 1, 2014

Heidi Schwegler • cast plastic, paint, gunshot residue

I chose Juggernaut, by Heidi Schwegler for the 'Small Pleasures' exhibition, since it responded well to the functionality and scale of a display case, while also flirting with its aesthetic appeal. It is intriguing how a receptacle for precious and beautiful objects, now houses what appears to be a distressed, mass-produced toy that was painted, but is instead, a carefully sculpted replica of the same.

As Heidi writes in her statement, "Oppositions are inextricably linked (birth/death, presence/absence, progress/destruction): it is a relationship in which one half cannot exist without the other. The closer the two, the greater the friction. It is my intention that the work resides within this space. Juggernaut speaks of the delight, chaos and inescapable trauma of the toddler's party, and for me this collision of emotionally opposite states perfectly illustrates of a moment of anguish."

A longer conversation that I had with Heidi, on the topic of ruins can be read here - <http://drainmag.com/peripheral-ruin-an-interview-with-heidi-schwegler/> – Avantika Bawa



OCT 1, 2014

L • canonized object

I received this brick as a gift from a relative shortly before he passed away. It is an object that was blessed by Amma, a Hindu spiritual leader, during one of her visits to the US. I am fascinated by the process that allows this ordinary brick to become 'visible' within the matrix of venerated artifacts; a process akin to the one that makes objects sensible as works of art. It's an operation where base material is transformed through a certain kind of ritual by someone with the appropriate authority, resulting in an object that appears in a new matrix where the suspension of disbelief is presupposed. – L



AUG 1, 2014

Judy Rushin • acrylic on panel with scuffs

In the spirit of her work titled "The Ding is the Object of Desire," Judy Rushin mailed this miniature painting from Tallahassee to Wichita without any packing. The resulting composition is a combination of intent and accident, where the network of carefully composed geometric pattern is altered by the various scuffs and dings accumulated in transit.



JUN 2, 2014

Sarah Walko • found and mixed media

There were many worthy applicants for the 'Small Pleasures' exhibition, and I admired the range of approaches. However, Sarah Walko's work was distinctive in that it combined a mad scientist aesthetic with a flexibility of scale and material that surprises upon close inspection. Her pantheist approach notes the similarity of urge that produces a bird's nest by one species, and a test tube by another. Walko's combination of natural and cultural materials seems specific in a manner that not only suggests that her selections are not random—but that they might actually be casting a spell. – Craig Drennen



APR 1, 2014

Margaret Noel and Kevin Mercer Jr. • collage, mixed media object

Small pleasures could be considered transitory experiences of enjoyment that, even if enormous, dissolve into memory once they are over...compressed versions of the original full-life, technicolor event. Drive-by vistas, trailer homes, scaffolding, billboard images: each element that comes from the combined work of Margaret Noel and Kevin Mercer Jr. against the background imagery of Levente Sulyok are as transitory as mushrooms...things that quickly appear, flourish briefly and then disappear almost as fast.

The scaffolding in Levente's billboard sized image creates a huge stage-in-progress for a tiny show--a little exhibition space about the size of a drive-through window serving up Margaret Noel's four by nine inch collage, itself like a miniature billboard depicting a road trip view of a fast approaching city from a more rural looking highway. Parked just below is Kevin Mercer Jr.'s toy sized sculpture, a nostalgic feeling, somehow collage-like construction of a trailer home. No mailbox, no landscaping--this is trailer is only stopping for a short time.

Seeing all these pieces together might seem to describe some sort of an account of an event...who knows, a traveling show? a rock concert? a carnival? What the event is doesn't matter though, not so much as the feelings these pieces collectively describe--sensations that orbit around the idea of an event...something that we move through, enjoy briefly, and pass out of. The telescopic viewfinders across the street from the grand billboard remain as the only true stationary points in the show. Like bridges, like memory, we look through them to see, in pieces and parts, the whole picture. — Dante Brebner



FEB 2, 2014

Ajean Lee Ryan • found fabric, mixed media

As objects, Ajean Lee Ryan's miniature creations are really engaging. I kept going back, wondering what they are and what their purpose could be. Is "My Mesa" a pile of abject material? A delicious stack of pancakes? A landscape? Perhaps it's all of the above. – Nina Tichava



DEC 2, 2013

Peter Vas • solar powered garden light

Quote from the artist:

“I recently purchased one of those solar powered garden lights for my porch. I had the top of the light sitting on a table unassembled. The built in sensor activated the light once it got dark in the room, and I was pleasantly surprised by the pattern it projected onto the wall.

To experience the pattern the light creates, the viewer will have to be in the right place at the right time: during or after sunset.”



OCT 1, 2013

Christine Shank • mixed media miniature

Christine Shank's series of photographed dioramas of dilapidated domestic interiors are both haunting and beautiful. The viewer peers through windows and doorways to discover scenes of tragic disasters. Homes abandoned and forgotten. At times, homes destroyed by disasters, both natural and manmade, physical and emotional. The viewer is confronted with more questions than answers.

Her work presents a fragment of a larger narrative and the viewer becomes the author of that larger narrative. I believe Shank's work is perfectly suited for Small Pleasures' mini gallery because experiencing her work from the safe distance of the telescope further emphasizes the viewer's role in the proposed narrative.

– Dustin Parker



AUG 1, 2013

Alma Hollander • text on paper

How is this not one of the simplest and most over-looked of life's small pleasures?

Word up, Alma.... I'm picking up what you're laying down. – Seth Minor

**TAKE OFF YOUR
SHOES AND SOCKS.
STEP BACK ONTO
THE GRASS AND FEEL
THE GROUND BELOW
YOUR SOLES.
YOU MAY BECOME...**

JUL 1, 2013

James Farmer • found and collected objects, inkjet print

I think this piece is very simple but has the potential to trigger a lot of emotions and memories for the viewer. It's a powerful piece; like a still from a movie. It will mean different things to everyone, and that makes for good art. – Wade Hampton



JUN 3, 2013

Women 4 Women-Knitting 4 Peace • recycled yarn

After the Ulrich Museum's campus-wide yarn bombing was disassembled in Fall 2012, the yarn has taken on new life through the local chapter of Women 4 Women – Knitting 4 Peace. They are a non-profit that specializes in sending small pleasures to people all over the world.

This organization knits hats, scarves, socks, shawls and other articles of clothing for people living in areas of conflict who struggle to have warm clothes during cold winter months. In additions to these items, ever-smiling peace pal dolls, like the one displayed, are given to the children as a gesture of good will. These odd yet delightful figures bring moments of happiness to children across the globe.

With this selection, I hope viewers will consider the importance of recycling materials, the poetic beauty of the stitch, the shared humanity in the act of giving a hand-made object, and take pride in the efforts of their local communities who are making meaningful strides toward world peace – one small pleasure at a time.

– Lindsey Herkommer



MAY 1, 2013

James Ackerley Porter • toothbrushes in jar

I am pleased to present the first object featured by *Small Pleasures*. It allows me to elaborate on the spirit of the project in general. In many ways, *untitled* is the perfect intersection of art and life. These toothbrushes, retired from their intended use, have been transformed in the artist's studio as tools in the process of various creative activities over the years. Now they are collected in a recycled jar and claim their own place in the world as part of a spontaneous sculpture. But Porter's vase of intense color also operates on the border between the private and the public, much the same way that Morandi's collection of bottles or Miro's old shoe in *Still Life with Old Shoe* served as points of inspiration for deeper investigation. – Levente Sulyok

