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CONSTANT DAYDREAM

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CONSTANT DAYDREAM

by

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A THESIS

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"That the world of things can open itself to reveal a secret life – indeed, to reveal a set of actions and hence a narrativity and history outside the given field of perception – is a constant daydream that the miniature presents. This is the daydream of the microscope: the daydream of life inside life, of significance multiplied infinitely within significance."

My work depicts an imaginary world of objects, where secret desires and complex relationships are explored through a language of decorations and toys. I am interested in what draws us to amusing or nostalgic objects, whose only function is to provide us with emotional reinforcement. Collections of things can act as documentation of our ideals, aspirations, abilities, memories and our concept of self. These collections are a “constant daydream”, a retreat into an alternate reality, and an inanimate memorial to our relationships, goals, anxieties, obsessions, and vulnerabilities.

My intention is to develop visual and conceptual relationships inside this miniature world of found objects, cast paper, craft materials, dollhouse furniture, plaster, hot glue and expandable foam. This world is my collection and an external record of my experiences. The scale and whimsical nature of the objects I use evokes the act of play, and play as a process functions as a method of generating my imagery. I define “play” as a way of thinking with the hands, and I use this approach to distill, understand and transform reality through the objects I create and arrange. There are associations that then evolve into situations and narratives that take place within the paintings, drawings, and prints.

By working at a miniature scale, I invite the viewer to have an intimate experience with the work. Our bodies are enormous in relation to these tiny structures, and they draw us in to carefully and closely examine them. While their size is alluring, it also isolates them and makes the viewer an outsider to their world. Their preciousness and toy-like attractiveness gives them power over us and conversely, by their delicacy and fragility, we are a threat to them as Gulliver was to the Lilliputians.

While the sculptures are arranged as a collection, the two-dimensional work explores these forms in isolation. The paintings and prints are visual moments of a fragmented narrative. They are part of a withdrawal into my imagination, where fantasy is real and objects escape their physical reality. Yet within this “set of actions,” I perceive our own flawed and vulnerable existence, which provides the subtext for these images. Isolation, conflict, responsibility, old age, and death creep into this candy-colored world. These objects cannot escape their own significance: the emotions and personal mythology they represent.

I work with different media in order to examine the tension between finite and fluid, tactile and emotional, and concrete and fictive. The contrast between two-dimensional work, sculpture, embossed printed lines and rich brushstrokes helps to further explore these dichotomies. The process of creating, arranging and reflection provides me with a balance in the studio by allowing me to react to some objects immediately and reflect on others with obsessive analysis. I am able to fluctuate between fast-paced working and analytical introspection. The different aspects of my artistic process engage me in very different ways, and I feel that this then becomes a part of the viewer’s experience with the work.

The delicate and intimate fragility of my objects makes them likely to break, tear or unravel, and I explore that anxious helplessness in my work. I obsessively create bonds to hold things together by braiding, crocheting, stacking, gluing, painting, and printing. Yet these relationships are tentative, and the intricate knots, systems and stories threaten to break apart. Eventually we awaken from a temporal and distorted mirror of human life into the reality of our own complex and fragile existence.
Anne Ruehrmund
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