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A Relationship of Parts

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A Relationship of Parts

By

Jacob Francois

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Santiago Cal

Lincoln, Nebraska

April 2013

A Relationship of Parts

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University of Nebraska, 2013

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Through their actions these sculptures allude to our own bodies. The viewer having never seen such an object, its components take on names: lungs, mouth, appendages, or ribs. Our perception of the object shifts to somewhere between what we are and what it is. This shift in perception allows the viewers to project self upon these sculptures. It is not the physical likeness that we identify with, but their actions. Unlike mechanical tools, these objects serve no purpose. If they were accomplishing a task they would only be machines. The function only serves their existence.

The pumps and valves of these sculptures are only components; however, once the parts are combined the parts simulate functions that relate to our own body. The sculptures act upon our empathy twisting and bending as they struggle to breathe. Each part affects the action of the parts it is connected to; they compound and become organic. Unforgiving structures of metal and wood constrict a balloon pressing into its rubber surface. The latex becomes more like skin as irregular contours and transitions form across its exterior. Alone these parts are industrial materials; together they become like our own flesh. They are vulnerable.

Like people they go about their routine, affecting each other, and their surrounding environment. Beyond the relationship with their surroundings each unit comprising the sculpture carries out its task unaware of its counterparts. Through each unit or parts place in a larger system the significance of the single component is transcended. The qualities of the whole now exceed the qualities of the parts. In this way its self-serving purposes are what make the object significant. Each part of our own body continues its actions. Combined they define who we are. Like each of these components we are part of a larger system that remains in balance. We exist as a part of a world, a space, unaware of our significance or futility.





