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Your Turn

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Your Turn

By

Samuel J. Berner

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 Peter Pinnell

Lincoln, Nebraska

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Your Turn

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University of Nebraska, 2013

Advisor: Peter Pinnell

I pursue art that makes physical contact with the viewer, art that needs to be touched and changed by its surroundings and inhabitants. Relational Aesthetics are integral to my conceptual approach. I value the life my work takes on through the viewer, stemming from the object. A temporal grouping of participants, their reaction and effect, complete the work. Interactions take a democratic approach, giving every viewer a chance, to promote dialogue through shared experience.

My work challenges the notions of art and the relation of preciousness and object. Through participation I hope the viewer asks: What is art? What is art for? Why is art the way it is? My process is quick and often crude, yet I place it in the context of beauty and art. The materials I choose to use: tyvek, a common weatherproofing material, unfired clay, and house paint further question the history of art as precious. I enjoy this raw-aesthetic approach for the questions it poses to art.

My art is energetic, often colorful assortments of ordinary materials: Clay for its malleability, tyvek for its lightness and strength, and brightly colored house paints for their playfulness. The objects are created using ordinary materials, because they are easily recognized and understood by my perceived audience, creating a level of comfort

that instigates play. The shapes and forms give evidence of the energy and process by which they were created. Like street art, my work is quick and highly dependent on the environment it is occupying. While the work is created in a studio, it is made to expand over any given space often overlapping onto itself.

The interactive aspects of the work are heavily rooted in the fluid and fun nature of Fluxus. Explosions of rampant color unabashedly hung from the wall or piled on a surface are the result of the day-to-day thoughts that can't be organized. From self-destructive paintings to carving and cutting of unfired clay, the art is in a constant progression to an unknown destination. I leave possibilities open to represent the infinite nature of life and my inability to stay still.

