



Project Space

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Ariana E. Fraser

Seeking something missing, missing something left behind

February 9 - April 6, 2024

You show yourself, to yourself – in doubles.

In the packing of plastic Tupperware –
canning solution
and pissing on moving territory.

It wasn't yours,
but you've oriented yourself to it.

*

When a body moves, we hoard the past in our long arms, curling and fingering a point of belonging, a place to put a memory. Objects reappear, becoming vertical and learning how to walk again, bidding blindly to an augmented backdrop of unremarkable shadow puppets – tying string too tightly and watching the blood go bad on the tip of her finger. There is something behind it, something under it, and around it – on a dancing grid – making snow angels on unruly carpet, dusting up something worn, something reanimated.

Seeking something missing, missing something left behind is a point of intersection, a shrine of the mundane, positioning the space in worship of the worn, the before, or the left behind. In a conceptually rich body of installation work, Ariana E. Fraser pays credence to the hyper-normal, exhibiting the object in multiples, continually capturing the ephemeral in mourning of passed places and the people who inhabited them.

As particular objects come in and out of focus throughout the gallery space, the artist walks an intermediary between the thing-itself and its recollection by committing her personal possessions to installation, and then repainting them with a different sense of corporality. Through this cycling and shifting of the object, Fraser creates a dialogue between her sculptures, paintings and found object installations, turning her belongings on different sides, and making present the weight of tactility – looking to tattoo the hands and reach behind herself for what is no longer moving. There is a command to keep it all with us, grasp it, or sift through the clutter for it – creating language so as to always preserve one's experiences.

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“What is left? And what remains? Ephemera remains. They are absent and they are present, disrupting a predictable metaphysics of presence.”¹

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In Fraser's work, the home and the harshness of its memory is held open in the permeance of the static object – its original context dismembered in an act of contemplative reorganizing. Fabrication of the art-object becomes both literal and metaphor as Fraser reconstructs subtle moments of intimacy through an enmeshing of the real and the reassembled. For Fraser, the object becomes witness, its value dematerialized and transformed into symbol – where microplastics embed themselves in warm bellies, undigested and outlasting their utility.

¹ Moñoz, José Esteban. “Gesture, Ephemera, and Queer Feeling.” Essay. *In Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, (NYU Press, 2009), p. 70-71

Stationed between two points, the liminality of a moving possession is a reminder of a nagging question:

What do you take with you when everything is left behind?

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Following Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientation, Objects and Others*², the reader is confronted with how one orients themselves in relation to an object or pre-determined space. It matters where it's located, the context changing and shifting plains. Repetitive actions can turn the body in previously marked directions, making the existence of queerness a sight of reorientation, where the queer body is pulled towards objects and others deemed "non-perceivable".³ Her work makes present a queer consciousness, where an object's purpose can become ambiguous and less defined, reordering the world, and seeing it anew.

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"Becoming reoriented, which involves the disorientation of encountering the world differently, made me wonder about orientation and how much "feeling at home," or knowing which way we are facing, is about the making of worlds"⁴

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Ahmed's writings emphasize the ways bodies shape and are shaped by their surroundings. The queer body cuts through previously established ways of being, a breaking with normative patterns – a moving away from prediction or the horizontal.

² Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. (Duke University Press, 2006)

³ Kojima, Dai. "A Review of Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*." *Phenomenology and Practice*, Volume 2 (2008) No. 1, p. 88–91.

⁴ Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. (Duke University Press, 2006), p. 21

Where the home functions as a resting place, designed with cohesion and conventionality in mind, objects or persons who survive the schism are made to be confrontational, moving in a different direction and shredding skin between narrow openings.

For Fraser, the home can be an anchor, providing a sense of stillness while simultaneously displacing or suffocating the Queer body. When one chooses to leave a familiar place seeking something better, the body is destabilized, always in motion – walking the line between belonging and non-belonging. With each installation, Fraser's work confronts this intermediary asking the viewer to rethink what an object is used for. Her work persuades the viewer to the floor, where we squat down low, watching the aftermath of release – bending the back forward in order to see, where her waste rests between two created points, jarred as evidence – a wet specimen in place of her previous lives.

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In white space the body of the home is shorn bare to skin – a tension buzzing in the abdomen, twisting the waist into shapes.

Where she's breathing through cheap bottles and drying up bouquets – brought into animation, continually jumping between yesterdays.

She'll search for lost jewelry under waterbeds, feeling it pop and laying low.

Feeling it deflate and spreading open her paper legs.

Inside, she's made of faux fur and soggy tissue, All desire.

Made of porcelain and dried orange peels, All desire.

Made of glass and polyester, wool, and foggy plastic containers.

With the body gone, they'll see you in everything you've carried on your back,

they'll see you weeping women's names and forgetting your shoes at the last place
you stayed,

they'll see you in a child born to memory – just for a moment before she's quilted,

just for a moment before the bedroom forgets its function.

In all the things you've thrown away,

in coffee rings and empty vessels, fermenting above the eyes on a too tall shelf,

following brandings left in various places.

A collection of moving parts, circling in-
between, every pocket opened when they
investigate the scene.

Just for a moment, she's a dripping beauty asleep,

early light always edging towards the ends of her feet.

- Francis Pitsadiotis