

HUNTER MFA THESIS

SPRING 2012

May 16 - June 16
Reception: May 16, 6-8PM
450 West 41st Street, NY, NY

Becky Brown

Listen to a conversation with Becky Brown



I Walk Like a Building (detail)
Drywall, styrofoam, paper, paint
Dimensions variable

Becky Brown works in painting, collage, sculpture, installation, and time-based formats (video and slideshows). Uniting her diverse media is a sense of an internal logic, drawn primarily from literary or poetic sources, and a concern for architecture and spatial relationships. Her works can also be described as playful. In a series titled *Seatings* (2010), for instance, she creates looming sculptures made from chair seats, of the orange-and-yellow classroom variety, placed on top of brightly colored stilts. Installed, the sculptures produce an Alice-in-Wonderland-like space that reverses the viewer-object relationship. Childlike, they conjure memories of sitting in a chair that is too tall or an adolescent growth spurt that you have not quite adjusted to. The *Seatings* works are painted in Brown's characteristically prismatic palette, and exemplify the artist's frequent practice of re-engineering throwaway objects. She often combines newspapers, cardboard tubes, and Styrofoam, among many other quotidian items, in a unique, rambling grammar.

For the Hunter College MFA Spring 2012 Thesis Exhibition, Brown found a half-wall and built out the other side to create a freestanding support. Using this like a sculptural canvas, she intends to add, subtract, and paint directly on the wall in a collage-based manner. The title of the work, *I Walk Like a Building* (2012), describes the viewer's ambulatory movement around the structure, and again, uses an allusion to architecture as a stand-in for a body in space. Nearly six-feet long and slightly above eyelevel, the wall resembles a tall fence. Its height makes the viewer aware of nearby spectators, on the opposite side, also engaged in looking. Seeing (or not seeing) is explored in how the viewer crosses the divide visually, and the artist's interventions in the structure itself. She relates, "I am interested in exploring the relationship between surface-as-whole-image (a window onto another world, in the tradition of painting) and surface-as-container-for-disparate-information, the way we are more accustomed to encountering surfaces in the real world." On one side of the wall, Brown has assembled a group of colorful images and objects that are seemingly tangential, yet related by their proximity and treatment. Some are appropriated and then transformed and others are from her imagination. Displayed together, they read like a cognitive map. If that side is more sculptural, the other is a painting that fills the entire wall. Also map-like, but to a very different effect, the painting is composed of a series of alternating bands of text and image based on the form of a sestina—a poem consisting of six stanzas of six lines each. As her culminating work in the Hunter College MFA program, *I Walk Like a Building* presents the artist's varied interests in a pithy and sensory way.

By Emily Schlemowitz

info

events

Critical Writing

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Accent theme by Handsome Code