

Na (at) MARQUISE...

FIONA CONNOR  
“Community Notice Board (Snax in the City)”  
23.6.–21.7.2018

Trabalhos (Works)...

CONVITE (INVITATION): offset print on card, 2018

MARQUISE: *Community Notice Board (Snax in the City)*, 2018, bulletin board, silkscreen and UV print on aluminium, vinyl, pins, surface coatings, 60.7 × 91.5 cm

Palestra (Lecture)...

FIONA CONNOR  
Maumaus Independent Study Programme  
25.6.2018

The title of this piece is *Community Notice Board (Snax in the City)*. The materials are bulletin board, silkscreen and UV print on aluminum, pins and tape.

The piece is from a small market in New Plymouth in New Zealand. Pedro and I have been discussing the show at Marquise for like, I don't know quite how long now, but for a while. And when I saw this board I was like this is what I want to present in Lisbon. So it's a reproduction of this bulletin board as it was found there.

I'm interested in bulletin boards as a way of thinking about what content ends up in an art work. A bulletin board is like a container or a frame that gets put up and people in it's local geographic proximity post their desperations, concerns, desires, needs. There is a sort of blind faith to them like hitch hiking which appeals to me.

I'm also really into them as a way of thinking about design, the composition ends up being cumulative and collective like the way that we've arranged ourselves in this room.

And then I think it's interesting how these works, through digital images end up as part of yet again another design program when they are reproduced for publication. This is in a newspaper from Istanbul. I'm interested in not only dealing with site specificity in terms of the site of the gallery but also specificity in terms of reproduction.

I just realized I missed a slide. Oh, yeah, this is actually the first slide I wanted to show. So this is like the piece originally installed in the community center in Joshua Tree. It was part of a High Desert Test Sites a project of this artist called Andrea Zittel. She has this yearly thing where she invites many artists to install works in this kind of desert area.

And so this is this piece from Joshua Tree Laundry and I presented it in the community hall. As you can see it's kind of camouflaged here. It is what you would expect to find and it kind of disappears. But then when it's presented in a formal gallery it goes into this art context and becomes something quite different.

So again that's like interesting to me 'cause it's a way of talking about the conditions of a gallery without making work that completely replicates it or relies on the site for it's meaning. So this is a really old work. I think this is from 2008 so it's like-- I just came across this and I thought it was really--

You know you find an old work and you're like, wow, I've been doing the same work for 10 years. So this piece was in a gallery in New Zealand that's like supported, like many, by the government and they do projects. So the piece was taking the ephemera from above the gallery manager's desks and bringing it out to the gallery.

So I think it's really-- It actually relates to this bulletin board as in the content is somewhat determined. And then the other part of the show was I replicated the floor and raised it like 300 mm. I was interested in creating a piece where everybody that entered the gallery was part of the piece in an embodied way. That like the work became this like all inclusive plinth.

So yeah. But once you're kind of in the piece, like submerged or like-- and then you kind of-- you could sense it but it was really hard to sort of understand the edges of it.

Thinking about these bulletin boards as a ways of like thinking about the way that people organize themselves. The way that like something like an anarchistic way of working together like without structure, self-organization but not to like-- that's something that I enjoy about them. But I am also interested in the flip side of that.

So there's certain bulletin boards in Los Angeles that the government-- not the government but the municipality-- Los Angeles, maintains and they paint these boards the color determined by the city. Like you'll be familiar with the sort of trope that a lot young artists get into like the city painting -- the city agency painting of the city.

Anyway, the pieces that I developed out of this was casting these bulletin boards in resin and then painting them in one color. So I call them monochromes. And they're really, really difficult to photograph which I kind of like about them. But when you get up close they're these sort of [indistinct] like I guess traumatized or like scarred surfaces.

And I guess I'd like to think about them as like a way of thinking about programs that are over-laid upon a group of people, yeah. I guess these questions-- I've been living in America for the last ten years and this-- these are questions I think about a lot with my relationship to the government.

So a show that happened was a mixture of the bulletin boards and the monochromes and I kind of liked that the bulletin boards are really in your face over-the-top and the monochromes kind of-- recede. Most of these boards were from Joshua Tree or Los Angeles or like the West Coast of the states. And when I make them I like visit them and measure them and spend a lot of time, like, documenting them, I guess. [long pause]

Shall we keep on going? Okay.

What is the relationship between monochromes and bulletin boards?

Well, like, in an autobiographical way, like, when I began making the bulletin boards, I came to this question of why not cast the boards? And I wanted to try that but I felt like that was another body of work in itself to like unify the surface through casting it. So taking all those scars and then making it into like one body.

So instead it's more like a development of time but I do like them-- I'm really into this like push mega-movement between the extrovert-ness of the board and the more like recessive-ness of the monochromes and the movement between these things I find them quite interesting.

What is the material you have?

They're like-- it's called aqua resin so it's like a water-based resin. I'll just quickly show you the-- this is like an example of making them in the studio. This is like the silicon molds over the boards. And then these are flipped and then you lay down these layers of resin then mesh, resin, mesh and you make this large frame and then I spray them. I use an auto-sprayer and spray them. It's just like--

So it's like a plastic or an epoxy--

It's a really nice product 'cause it's not toxic. It's, yeah-- I wanted to show you, yeah. All right. Do you cast things?

I have, yeah. I won't say that I do but I have.

I like-- I didn't really have a studio practice for a really long time and recently I've been having more of a studio practice and it's really fun. But yes, it's quite a shift for me. I used to work more on site.

So I thought maybe, if you guys are, I thought maybe I could talk about the first bulletin board I made and maybe that would be a good key for understanding them a little more. So there's this-- at UCLA, in this big university in Los Angeles is where the first message on the Internet was sent.

So it was like a place where the Internet was born. I don't know if you've seen the movie-- anyway, it's this department where the Internet was born. And I went there and I was really interested to see that they still used bulletin boards. Physical bulletin boards. So the first two boards I made were bulletin boards from the hallways of the computer science department.

This is another casting for them. So I'm gonna talk about another body of work now called Closed Down Clubs. Closed Down Clubs takes as its subject the front doors of clubs that are being closed. Whether they be discothèques or small cafes, theatrical musical clubs, places that hosted a community or supported a group of people and they have ceased to exist.

The first club I became interested in was Tonic in New York. This is a recent show at the MAK, which is Viennese institution, it has a space in Los Angeles and this is a collection of club doors. So they're all doors of clubs that have been closed. There's nine here. I think there's another six doors so it's this ever accumulating archive of doors of clubs that get installed free standing so you can circumnavigate them.

And again, like the bulletin boards all the ephemera is reproduced on metal. So it's kind of a mixture of like fastidiously reproduced things like the graffiti is screen printed and looser larger gestures. All the stickers are screen printed but then also it's kind of essentially of like this energy of more like a [indistinct] -- like it's the same kind of performative thing where you encounter them and you're thinking about the actions that were put out onto them.

Who is Esteban Schimpf?

Esteban Schimpf is the photographer. Pedro Reis did this flicker-post-- so anyway, make the doors through researching on the Internet and also by physically going to the site and measuring.

And do you get the door or do you recreate--?

I recreate the doors, yeah, so they're just like, yeah. So they're all just like made from the ground up. This is like a CMYK print so some of the printing is a little complicated. For me it's really important that I print the stuff and I make the stuff 'cause I somehow sort of see that all the work comes through my body in some way.

So I'm like producing these documents so that they're like, processed or digested. There's also into the bathroom and so on so-- This is a work that's up at the moment and as part of this body of work I commissioned a text to be installed in the space every month so this is the first piece by Travis Diehl, so I like the idea--

Like this whole body of work is about closure. About like this narrative that we're all kind of dealing with constantly about things ending whether it be an ecological story, whether it be a story of adjudication. The education system. Like we're all kind of leaning into all that kind of [indistinct] how do we reconcile this and I kind of felt like I wanted to like linger in that space and not just pretend like it wasn't happening.

But these texts are kind of important for me 'cause they're like wall texts-- maybe you can see them-- I don't think you can see it in these photos. I apologize. But it's just like up here, you can kind of see it back there, so that the wall texts, like every month there's a new wall text.

So Travis wrote kind of a poem where it's based on The Doors. Show Me The Way To The Next Whiskey Bar-- It's really nice. It's super nice to have my friend's pieces of writing in the space. And also in this space where ask people to put together soundtracks and so on. And it also is part of this body of work; I sent these glass postcards round.

So it's like an edition that people have like received in the mail and these are just photos when people receive them, they were really happy. So they like send me photos which was really sweet. That was from Liv and this is from Jerry. And this is just after I printed one of them in the studio. So it is screen print on glass. This is the piece of text that just went up a couple days ago.

So what the-- Kavior Moon the writer interviewed Rachel Mason one of family members that used to own Circus of Books-- it's a small book store that used to sell like smut and kind of stuff. It was infamous for never really selling anything. So she interviewed Rachel about her experience growing up and being in there.

What are the Glass postcards?

Well, it's like-- I guess it's like a poster for the show. The body of work is called Closed Down Clubs. And it was just like an invitation. I put them in boxes with foam and they put the URL of the show on the front. But I think I was like--

I guess this body of work for me like, I've always made books and ephemera additions and I think these bodies of work like combine publication and object. And I think that's an interesting kind of thing to bring together 'cause objects are seen as cumbersome and very slow-- temporal existence and publications are seen more I guess as-- well, not publications but like ephemera are more responsive and quick.

Yeah, so okay, so I think on the last kind of bit of the talk. All right.

So this is a project that I was just thinking about just like... Yeah, so, let me describe this. So this is a piece that was done in 2009. The work was just a letter that I wrote to the gallery with a review of their carbon footprint.

So I addressed the HVAC, which is the air conditioning. The lighting. The proposed solar. Paint with [indistinct] and so on. So the piece was a letter and then a while ago as an extension of that I went-- I think, going back to the gallery every so often and asking people for updates.

Like what have you acted upon? What is irrelevant? What is, you know. And so on the site you can click on the dots and it kind of like talks about people that are involved and how they

are reconciling the letter with their every day life 'cause I think that's a kind of an interesting thing to track.

The way that people are like actually implementing suggestions and changes into their regular every day life. So Andrew installed LEDs at various locations on campus and so on. Things like this. Neil Doshi designed this site.

But yeah, I was kind of interested in like the emotional or psychological space that we're kind of dealing with. I kind of feel that we're often put in this position of like, you're either doing something good or you're like a heathen and I think it's-- I think the space of digestion and like figuring it out is actually like maybe the mushy area that could be investigated more.

I kind of feel like I'm like-- maybe it's a little risky to sort of talk about such things in this room with you 'cause you probably are all very much on the same page after studying together for six months now. You're probably all like-- so I'm coming in like from a completely different context so I apologize if something I'm saying seems a little blunt.

So just like, because it was what we did last week-- Last week we went and the Varese Group met and this is a picture of Neil who designed the site that I just showed and Sasha and Pedro actually joined us and it was a really nice week. Everybody gave their bit, like led an event which was often a presentation or a discussion.

The general premise is that I fundraise to provide the context and like nightly meals, dinners and people get themselves there. Yeah, it's just kind of a nourishing thing. I'm kind of interested in creating support systems that are outside of like institutional framework or outside of the commercial framework. It's just like very [indistinct] and it's not about outcomes.

All we do is put out is a press release each year. This is on a walk we went. There was a massive mine next to these old farm buildings. And the last slide I wanted to show was another like, initiative that I'm-- like another sort of support system--

So I ran an artist run space and something that always came up is how they are not really sustainable. Like how you're making these exhibitions outside of a economic infrastructure. Well, that was what I wanted to do anyway. So this project is really light on the ground. Basically every year we put together a deposit of books, artist books and we have ten libraries that we partner up with.

So we partner up with like the Los Angeles Unified School District so like libraries that like are for school kids in Los Angeles to the Smithsonian -- Pompidou, Salt Istanbul, and so we have these partner libraries and we supply books to them every year.

And we give them books on condition that they cannot de-accesion them. So I guess it's about creating an archive within an archive and that the group of artists and people involved collectively support each other.

I think that's what I was gonna show you guys today. How many of you-- do you consider--? Are you all artists? Or are you different types of artists?

We're all artists here. How do you work things out time wise?

I think, like, you just, like, there are times when you are completely immersed in one and there are times that you're immersed in another but like, I feel that like having some sort of like sense of collectivity is really crucial to like the way I think about art and...

I have certain strategies that I use. Like, for instance with the Laurel Doody Library Supply I have an executive director, who gets paid a wage, so we meet every week for like

three hours. She has the email account, she does all the admin, but like, I do it for free but it just means that I don't have to feel the weight of answering emails. Stuff like that.

With Varese Group it's like total obsession for like two months a year. Yeah, is that a question that comes up with you? Like trying to balance--?

[indistinct question]

I mean my studio practice is where I'm something like participating in the market but the Varese Group--

[indistinct] your works are reconditioned or you sell them [indistinct]?

Yeah, that's just like a normal kind of-- not normal but-- 'Cause I like, I, too, like really like making stuff. Oh, okay. I like being physically involved with like building and construction and mold-making and like--

So you represent [indistinct] or--?

Yeah, I have, like, I work with some galleries. Yeah. Yeah. You guys, I feel like you should tell me after your thing today about industry and the art world. You should tell me some stuff.

[indistinct] I was thinking of how it changes when it moves from this one type of public where [indistinct]. Yesterday [indistinct] how do you feel about how the work changes from like a more typical gallery [indistinct]?

00:32:55

Yeah, like here in a classroom. Yeah.

[indistinct]

Uh, no. It's not just the-- it's just like the geographical opposite point on the globe but I think that's like actually something that I like-- I think they change a lot but I also think it's this like-- I feel like there's some classic tensions in art making and one of them is like how do you get an audience that isn't you to empathize with your work? To enter your world?

And it's like, it's like it's strength and it's weakness. It's like this idea of inter-subjectivity. Like is it possible for us to connect? And if so I kind of feel like this is a very foreign body and there's a point where it's a little bit-- It's like potentially when you invite somebody, like, to a party and they get spaced out. Like perhaps they, like, don't fit in or they're awkward and they're a little out of place and they, like--

I don't know maybe it's just like those kind of spaces. Like there are different, I guess, different expectations of different ways that people behave around objects. Sort of like in a home you kind of let things grow on you. It's a little slower. Like, in a gallery you tend to like-- it's more like you stand up and you're like, what?

You go to a work and you're like, what you got? So I think it's those kind of stances that are interesting but I do think that there is sometimes just a miss like, no-- like different language or--

But it's also funny what it does to this content of the specific flyers when you unify them [indistinct sentence] suicide prevention. I mean the content is actually [indistinct] something good. In a way I can quite relate to but then because it's also just a [indistinct] it's kind of unified with everything else and how do you feel about the concept of a specific [indistinct sentence]?

Totally, yeah, there's like a tension and there's like a little like disposable, marginal you could pass over it in an effect that like these are like significant messages. Again I think that's one of these, like, classic parts about an art object as their value is in the eye of the beholder to some degree.

Isn't it interesting that somebody can be like this is the most important art object and then another person could be this is not important at all? [background noise] [indistinct] I don't know. What do you think?

What I think? Well, I mean, I think that [background noise] but when I think about the [background crash] what do you call them?

Community Notice Boards?

For example coming to my hometown and seeing it at the local supermarket and realizing something about that place. Like I know that there are things that can be read from it but then it also becomes like very context specific. So, yeah, there was this person [indistinct]--

But do you feel like it's exploitative?

Maybe [indistinct] yes, but I'm not saying that it's isn't necessarily [overlaps] But it could also be the opposite effect. I was just curious about-

Yeah, I know. I think there's like an acidity to them. It's like there's acid in the water. Like, I find that in the essence kind of interesting. Like bile. Like it's a little ugly. A little desperate-- Like-- whoa! [laughs] Yeah.

I wasn't thinking of acid but I also [indistinct] work yesterday. It has this kind of violence. All about communication and reaching out and--

Totally.

[indistinct] But then here all of those collections are [overlaps] yeah, they're really--

[overlaps] They're really untethered from their community that they're made for. I totally agree. I think it's like the same violence that occurs in photography. I totally agree. And I think it's like interesting because as you say like they're untethered but they're actually probably-- they're getting more visibility than they-- If it were wanted-- almost too much visibility.

So I think those boundaries of-- I think those boundaries are like crossed, potentially-- Yeah. And I don't really-- it's weird, like, I do think it's violent to a degree but I-- I guess the feeling for me is like exploring that territory is also really present for me like as well as the violence.

It's also like exploring the territory is like... Like what makes the cut when you're making an artwork? Like what gets included in it? So I think that voice is-- do you know what I mean?

Yeah, I don't think it's like violence towards anyone in particular. I don't think it's really anything to anyone who posted these [indistinct]. It's like this disconnection. Like even if they're still reaching out somehow.

Totally. I agree.

It's like just that--

You mean formally it's violent. I hear you. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And it's also kind of weird that I reproduce them 'til they're almost like every piece of ephemera is like multicolored, like many times pulled through the screen -- you know it's kind of-- it's like a-- Yeah.

Like gentle violence.

Yeah. But casual violence?

Casual violence.

Do you like it in Los Angeles?

I am-- It's like super-interesting. Yeah. I like probably, yeah, I'm-- it's perfect for me, like, being a sculptor, like, producing objects. it's really horizontal, like, there are many different art worlds.

It's completely prismatic and really interesting but it's kind of like-- it can be kind of brutal too, like, like the moral compass is just like constantly spinning, like-- I mean Hollywood is just [overlaps] no, no, no, like just the place is like sometimes it's just--

You feel-- have you been? Yeah? Oh, that's cool. What did you do? [laughter]  
What did you do?

I was on vacation. I liked it though. [indistinct]

Yeah, or just-- I think there is still a little bit of this [background noise] culture is maybe still [indistinct] still being very like impersonal of course but--

But I really enjoy it. I mean, it's cool. It's like going to art stuff, like, the whole thing is like- there's like multiple art worlds and at least I think it's a bit like this maybe in some parts of Europe or definitely in New Zealand or Australia there's like-- [indistinct] there's like one triangle and like-- Success looks like one thing but like in L.A. like, the art world is optional.

Like you can be a really successful artist and just like not participate in the contemporary art world at all. And I really appreciate that. Awesome. // END OF FILE