

PITCH

Pablo de Laborde Lascaris

Galerie Gourvenec Ogor - Marseille

1st of November 2013 - 14th of December 2013

There is a point of view through which the social institutions of the world, and the processes of life, the universe even - the whole bit - can be seen to be games. Games, but not mere games, not trivialities. The playing of symphonies or the recitation of Shakespeare, this is no frivolous game, not mere playing. There is something in the nature of play then, though never serious, that can be utterly sincere. It is the joy of doing it for the sake of doing it - and this was once a great slogan of high modernist art. According to the art for art's sake ideology of Greenbergian formalism, the truest art was proclaimed as the most pointless and devoid of content, application, purpose and meaning, as possible. And all the artists tried hard to make their work true to itself, to its minimal medium, and so this became a real serious business. But serious business always kills the play. All the pure subtle feelings of a concerto, the motive power of a ballet, all white washed over by the plague of the serious? You have to laugh at it really, only then can you bring it around to being a game again. So it goes, this beauty and sincerity comes from an ability to play the game well, to do it with quality and with craft. Pablo de Laborde Lascaris is an artist who knows his craft well.

Born and raised in Mexico, Pablo graduated from the Fine Art course at Falmouth University in 2011 and has somewhat slingshot into the art world, winning the prestigious Royal British Society of Sculptors Bursary Award in 2012, and the International Emerging Artists Award in 2013. This exhibition, Pitch, brings selected works from these years together for the first time along side new works made specifically for the show. It is presented by Galerie Gourvenec Ogor in partnership with The International Emerging Artist Award and featured as part of the European Capital of Culture 2013 in Marseille. Pablo's work spans sculpture, installation, and performance video, often featuring oddly abstracted but meticulously constructed contraptions created from a limited palate of elements: wood, rubber, sand. They are straightforward and intuitive to the eye, though certainly not simple. With a light-hearted erudition, many of his sculptures invite the audiences' interaction - the structures in *Rung* (2012) for example as well as the eponymous *Pitch* (2012) are activated by their usage, coming alive with the roll and sway of the body in motion. Presented in cyclical format, the actions are shown without beginning or end, the structures are without direction, the actions without purpose. In other works there is something reminiscent of sea fairing craft; though fantastical and unusable, a buoy that floats only in imagined swell. The works remain open to new relationships, as childish exhortations, with no certainties, and a willingness to develop and to fail. A wondrous voyage to be embarked upon, both lightly and wholeheartedly.

Pablo de Laborde Lascaris' works are playful musings on the impermanence of forms. Aimed at destabilizing the monumental, unmoving nature in the tradition of sculpture, as well as questioning the linear narrative format of film and moving image. His work is transient, fleeting, yet evokes processes that are eternal. As sand seeps through the holes in an exquisitely constructed cube of various wood grains, in the piece *Cube* (2011) it describes the internal volume of the structure as a quantity of sand, so the dissolution of all matter with the rate of entropy will describe the atomic content of the universe. Pablo is materialistic in the most literal sense - driven by a love of material and the act of manipulating it, thereby referencing systems of the natural universe. It is an alchemical process, just as the Povera artists of the mid-century thought; art is the ability to combine and distort base materials in such a way as to create treasured materials, magic and marvellous deeds. (Celant, G. *Arte Povera*, 1969)

The relationship between form and concept here is the relationship between aesthetic and poetic - with aesthetics as sensory emotional values, i.e. the sense with which we judge the world around us, not just how things look. Craft is this very act, this esoteric practice and the art of doing it well.

In some applications, as with the freemasons, the phrase 'the craft' had (and still retains) the meaning of power and secret knowledge. - Dormer, P. (The Culture of Craft 1997)

Pablo describes his methodology as, often unpredictable, progressing with a degree of experimentation, and conceived through the process of play. Material play becomes a mode for design, and a form of almost spiritual discovery - childlike and open to change. Impermanence is the mantra - entropy, the inescapable, inevitable, drift of all things to no things, all forms into grains of dust. The artist's role is to pursue quality control for society and play the jester simultaneously. To guide us, through these ruts and knots, show us the beauty in a car tire and the fun to be had in a piece of pine. Both the ironic moralist and irreducible rascal, Pablo de Laborde Lascaris' craft is at play, and this is his Pitch.

Text by Michael Davis.

Davis is an artist and critic based in Glasgow, Scotland. He studied fine arts at University of Cumbria and has worked extensively as a writer, with Glasgow School of Art, Grizedale Arts, Wysing Arts and Jerwood Space, London.