

artillery

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You Can't Make Art By Making Art

Chandra Cerrito Contemporary



Stephen Whisler, *A Couple of Pages from Ulysses Soaked in the Last of My Coffee*, 1977

THIS EXPANSIVE TRIBUTE TO LEGENDARY BAY AREA CONCEPTUAL ARTIST David Ireland, hosted by Oakland gallerist Chandra Cerrito, is comprised of personal responses to Ireland by friends and protégés. Beyond direct references and use of similar materials, artists extrapolate from Ireland's varied sensibilities, which include Duchamp, Cage, Broodthaers and chance/process art in general. The exhibition title "You Can't Make Art By Making Art" comes from Ireland's own retrospective in 1980 at Claremont College, a reflection of another influence on Ireland—Zen Buddhism.

Mari Andrews' *Lineup* (1996), *Spool* (1996-2011) and *Ball for David* (2011), constructions of steel wool framed in wood, allude to Ireland's fondness for humble, at-hand, non-art materials; the latter inevitably suggests Ireland's dumbbells, concrete spheres that Ireland tossed from hand to hand for the 12 or 13 hours needed for curing.

Ray Beldner's *D.I., 08.25.30-05.17.09* (2011), a concrete slab in the gallery sidewalk inscribed with Ireland's dates, like a headstone, commemorates

Ireland's 1976 sidewalk repair performance, with a slide show echoing Tom Marioni's videotaping of the activity. Jordan Biren explores the relation of performance to its lexical documentation in *Performance Relation, and Relation (Disuse)* (1989), a portfolio of photographs and text. Randy Colosky considers Ireland's reclamation of construction materials in *Cinderblock with Great Stuff Expansion Foam* (2010)—which is, in a further twist, actually *trompe-l'oeil* painted bronze—as well as his *Simpsons* in the XYZ Axis (2010), metal straps used for earthquake-proofing houses bolted together and splayed like playing cards into an industrial-strength rosette.

Daniel Nevers' *Gestalt Theory* (2011), a sculpture of tubing and rubber held in tension by bungee cords within a door-frame structure, recalls Ireland's love of the literal and overt—memorably symbolized by his removal of the casement window framing in Mie Preckler's *500 Cap's Treat, a Project for Ireland* (1983-1985) so that he could observe the ropes and pulleys. Sabine Reckewell's *Square #17* (1979), a weaving made with only one stitch and one tool, "as minimal and transparent as possible," is based on a similar orientation toward process and clarity, while *Remnants from Nails in the Ceiling* (1978), the box of strings and nails left over from her installation piece that Ireland admired as an unintentional readymade artwork, reflects his and her trust in accident and intuition.

Sheila Ghidini's *Chair of Heightened Perception* (2011) and Preckler's *500 Cap's Treat* nod to Ireland's use of dilapidated chairs as human surrogates, and his fondness for wordplay; Ghidini's represents Zen attentiveness while over Preckler's chairs hover six Irish woolen caps, making the artist's presence palpable.

Kerry Vander Meer's *Bones of Eire* and *490 Grams* (both 2003) come from a residency off the coast of West Ireland where monks lived in isolation for centuries; David Ireland too felt an affinity for these obsessive solitaries. Her sculptures of sliced and reassembled potatoes resemble cairns of stones and the snakes legendarily banished by St. Patrick. Finally, Stephen Whisler presented *Untitled Shelf* from Ireland's 1980 show, concrete supporting a rolled-up and now yellowed *Los Angeles Times*; his own *A Couple of Pages from Ulysses Soaked in the Last of My Coffee* (1977) is a pulped and humorous version of stream-of-consciousness life.

- DeWitt Cheng