

Making Projects Happen

Ric Spencer

Bevan Honey's current work at Galerie Dusseldorf, titled Project, is put together with a mix of plywood, polymer resin, polyurethane and automotive acrylic paint and if you think this is beginning to sound like some of the projects you've got going in the backyard then you're not too far off the mark.

For Project Honey has conjured up some magic from the cut offs and dregs of DIY glue in an ode to that last vestige of male sanctity, the backyard shed. Sure there's plenty of broader social meaning attached to the work but what I really enjoyed about Project is its unapologetic display of the enjoyment of making. And not just making art for art's sake but the making that seeps from the marrow of our lives, from repairs to reassembling to making those favourite things last just that little bit longer.

The works in Project owe much to this history of tinkering and pottering but in Project there is no hint of disrespect, no irony, this is an honest homage to suburban making and Honey's pieces are crafted with due respect. Although derived from the processes of repair these bog jobs are not half baked, they're rubbed and polished back with a sense of refinement and class that can only be achieved through time spent making by hand.

This sense of sophistication is reflected too in the titles. For example the GT series is derived from the Grand Tourer, a deliberate evocation of high performance making with an eye to the finer things in life. An intriguing paradox considering a number of the pieces are deliberately left in an "incomplete" stage of progress.

For instance GT III could be described as beautifully unfinished and it's a good example of how Honey is seduced by process. This piece comprises two panels, one is rubbed back to evoke the final stage of a car panel before the paint goes on while the other panel is taken a step further back too reveal the mounting framework of the art piece.

GTW and Flag VII articulate further this tension between covering the process over or allowing the time and input to show through. Both works are based on the design of a car door from a Valiant. GTW offers the viewer the plywood, manufacturing stamps and all, while the half way groove is left as rubbed back paint. Flag VII is the same form but painted in a sultry cream finish.

All of these works show that just because something isn't "finished" doesn't mean it isn't well made. They also tell us a little of Honey's conscious meditation on the stages of making and demonstrate an inherent knowing of when something is just right. It's a knowing you can't learn overnight, its comes through time spent drawing out meaning from material, like water from a well, by layering, rubbing back, rebuilding and then, just sometimes, painting it all over. Honey's Project is viewing that reminds us of a world where relationships are built slowly over a couple of beers in the back shed and a project once started demands some serious time commitment to see it through.

BEVAN HONEY : project - Galerie Düsseldorf - 7 May - 4 June 2006

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