

Tune a Can

*Well, she talks to all the servants
About man and God and law*

There is work in this exhibition. The work in this exhibition is also work. Coincidentally, or perhaps via premonition, the work forecloses the temporal percentage. The work is about work. The work it takes to look. To look like someone. Ladies, stars, athletes. The amount of work we work to work to look like ladies, stars, athletes. The work may also be about a so-called privacy, a so-called publicity, a so-called property right, a so-called “thing” that belongs.

*Feelings unknown and you're all alone
Flesh and bone by the telephone
Lift up the receiver*

The work is about labor. The (hand)work necessary to crush, move, and lift mangled pieces of metal. The work necessary to make something visible invisible, and vice-versa. The work is about value, valuation, and evaluation. Of location, context, site. Of movement. The work is about size, texture, color, weight. It is about the material.

*Duchamp once quipped,
“Whatever the critic may say, the work makes the grade by itself.”
He was asked, “But what would you like the critic to do?”
Duchamp: “I don't care.”*

The work is about lines, formations, spotlights, sectors. The work it takes to make a representation of something already at work. The work is about industry, about being industrious. About generators, light-bulbs, rubber tires, and little fake plastic trees. It is this work, your friend, a picture post-card, which expands your world beyond your foreseeable frontiers and borders, as imaginary as they may be. But the work knows, my friend, that it is this imagination which we use to foresee.

*It is enough that we set out to mold the motley stuff of life
into some form of our own choosing;
when we do, the performance is itself the wage.*

Each work works its own trade. Each work works its own mark. Each work divides itself from other works, and yet depends on that division to unite itself to itself, and to other works. Each work weaves a history through hue, tone, shade, and shadow. Each work weaves its own blanket, and hangs itself through execution and executives. The work may go on trial, but it knows, that although money buys the best representation, money does not buy the best presentation. The work does not ask to be judged. It asks to be critiqued.

*Love the land and fellow man
Peace is what we strive to have
Some folks have none of this*

Each work is visible. It appears. If there is something about seeing, it is that. Robert Irwin once said, "seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees." Just as love cannot exist without a contract, seeing cannot exist without an agreement. If you agree, you can look. If you look, you should not necessarily agree. But look. Look at me. Look at me work. Look at me, the work. The work cares about vision, visuality, about how it looks. It cares about color, line, shape, form, size. But do not forget. Unlike art, justice believes that it is blind. A judge and a critic. Unlike art, they care.

*I can see the destiny you sold
Turned into a shining band of gold*

Each work receives, and each work transmits. It inks while incorporating. It materializes into little pieces of worked pulp in your little hand, in your lint-lined pocket, in your Fendi wallet. It disseminates text, images, sounds. Static and non-static. It forms and informs. It attempts to relate. It promises. To form. A relationship. To communicate.

*She skipped away to the shop
She found she didn't have enough
She clocked him looking right at her
And sucked on a lollipop*

What each work has, it has in common. Each work asks you to participate. To participate in making it. In making it work. In working it. Each work promises to deliver a good, a common good, a beautiful good. And yet, each work resists. It resists you, who come to it with nothing but love, hope, admiration, and appreciation. It negates. It declines your offer. It moves away from you, physically, but more importantly, forcefully.

Because of this, you fight to understand it. You attempt to renegotiate, to mediate.
Through law, the mystical foundation of authority.

*Maybe tomorrow
A new romance
No more sorrow
But that's the chance*

The work is supreme, and each is a majority. Each work asks you to interpret it, case by case, without precedent. Each work here breaks. It breaks something, perhaps the past, but not with the past. And when it breaks, it moves, it shifts, it discombobulates. And as with rules and regulations, it projects.

*See a blind man on the street
Looking for something free
Hear the kind man ask his friends
'hey, what's in it for me?'*

And yet, here we are, and you are still wondering, what does law have to do with art?
Why should we taint and contaminate one with the other?

I don't care.

Sergio Muñoz Sarmiento
Program Director
Art & Law Residency
November 2011