

Playing with Scraps in the Light or Prototype for an exhibition the details of which are not yet known.

it starts with stopping. to look at things used to hold other things. these skins, enclosings, envelopes. the plastic container your yogurt is packed in, the mesh nets your oranges are bagged in. things with holes and openings, detachable ties, or lids. the colours meant to enhance the product or catch the eye. materials that come into the home pre-destined to go out via the garbage, the recycling bin. but something stops you. you see an undefinable potential and so, you put these things aside. over time you have a collection.

Anne Bertrand collects things. In the past the artist has created video animations and elaborate hanging apparitions employing cast off lids and caps and rolls and ties and nets and whatever else is at hand with a wry sense of humour which deftly critiques our consumer obsessed culture and our status driven art milieu. As I head to Bertrand's house to see her recent work in progress, I am expecting something of the same. And although there is a continuation from Bertrand's past work there is also a departure. A quiet, almost serene aura of calm, a delicate fragile beauty. Separate forms join with thin tendrils of plastic ribbon, paperclip wires twisted undone. Still there is an interest in pattern and repetition, still a transforming of the mundane into the unexpected, still a playful reconfiguring of collected, sorted, adjusted "waste," recycled, or up cycled. But rather than a gentle poke, this time we are invited to immerse ourselves, the materials unhinged from their past lives evoke an amorphous land, a dreamscape we are invited to wander through.

because i arrive when daylight from the large window adjacent to the exhibition space still seeps in, the shadows created by the overhead lights are subtle, the light reflecting off the plastic tie wraps and mesh bags, soft. the three dominant forms, three body sized permeable forms, hanging from the ceiling, move ever so slightly in relation to the air currents. the sound of the motor emitted from the slowly rotating lights creates a quiet, methodical hum, a soundscape to the fluid shadows appearing on the walls and the floor. i have entered a moving liquid world. i tell Anne i feel i am inside an ocean. we move the objects around, experimenting with placement and height relations. an older work is moved to another room, the double sidedness of the hanging paper roll that makes a screen for shadows is highlighted.

As transitory as the shifting shadows are, and delicate as the cast-off materials appear, our body does not assume a bounded sense of solidity in relation. rather, we feel our echo in these forms, the sound of the motor and the ever-moving lights bathing us too. we are made aware of our nebulous unboundedness, and we know we too are here, hanging on, gently moving with the in and the out of our breath, for we too are in perpetual movement, casting our shadows on surfaces near and far.

karen elaine spencer

The installation is presented one evening only.

At the home of the artist, Saturday January 20, 2024, in Montreal