

JDJ

Ara Dymond

October 24 - December 14, 2024

Ara Dymond grew up in New York City. He spent his formative years in Manhattan's downtown creative community and later Brooklyn, where he lived in Greenpoint and worked out of two studios in Long Island City. While driving around or skateboarding, Dymond noticed, photographed, and collected things along his path. Over the course of his 15-year career, he amassed countless discarded, overused, and underloved things: a Bic pen with a chewed-up cap, a twisted plastic drinking straw, scraps of corrugated cardboard, splayed safety pins, well-worn dog toys, stuffed animals. Many of these objects bore someone else's marks—traces of seemingly mundane activities; others had a strange, sentimental, or humorous energy that for Dymond, earned them a place in his menagerie. Through the stuff that he picked up and picked out, he developed a pictographic language of signs and symbols that he pictured, duplicated, and endlessly transformed across sculptures, photographs, reliefs, notebooks, and even the tattoos that covered his body. For the viewer, they become a familiar cast of characters. For Dymond, they were both inspiration and starting point for works in two and three dimensions. This exhibition highlights works made between 2018 and 2022 that exemplify Dymond's material investigations with bronze and resin in a series of wall-reliefs and sculptures made in each.

Dymond's encyclopedic knowledge of art history echoes throughout his project. For example, Jean (Hans) Arp's 1923 portfolio for *Merz* magazine *7 Arpaden* (7 Arp Things) comprised carefully titled images that the artist—who was also a poet—called his "object pictures." Dymond amassed "Ara things," which he arranged and rearranged for his richly hued and seductively textured resin reliefs. He composed these with a childlike attunement to the rigor of play—seen together they suggest a storyboard or children's book about things lost and hoped to be found, their subtle melancholy echoing the playful gravitas of Arp's 100-year-old glyphs. The outline of a toilet plunger appears in the reliefs; a hardware store purchase the artist made years prior that he first split in half and filled with plaster and later cast in bronze. The bronze also appears in this exhibition, one of several in-the-round manifestations of the imagery that bubbles up from under the dense reliefs. If Dymond used resin as a kind of image-preservative, he used bronze to memorialize the throwaway nature of consumption, with scraps of cardboard lovingly cast and composed in a series of geometric wall works. At the same time, Dymond's exalted plunger might also suggest that, for the artist, we have reached the end of some hazily defined art historical line—methodological, philosophical, stylistic—first initiated by Marcel Duchamp and his infamous *Fountain* (1917).

Dymond endeavored to create his own roster of shapes and objects that he obsessively iterated in a processual continuum. His imagery is so consistent that it operates much like a painter's signature brushstroke or compositional facture. As Arp and his fellow Dadaists and Surrealists presaged the coming image-economy that Pop and Pictures Generation artists later imbued with urgent criticality, Dymond also understood that images are a shared language, so completely overused as to be emptied out, ready for whatever meaning we might project,

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attribute, or reassign to them. Dymond's practice was itself an iconography, a lexicon that built a material world.

Ara Dymond (1978-2022) was born in Honolulu, Hawaii and lived and worked in New York City. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Art History from the State University of New York at Purchase in 2001. Solo exhibitions include: Marlborough Chelsea, New York, (2014); Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica (2013). Two-person exhibitions include: *Ara Dymond and Jesse Willenbring: WimlpeNrsGonSat!ion*, Laurel Gitlen, New York (2012); *Ara Dymond and Jason Nocito*, Taxter & Spengemann, New York (2011); *Ara Dymond and Uri Aran: New Work*, Mesler & Hug (2008), Los Angeles. His work has been included in group exhibitions including: Galerie Gabriel Rolt, Amsterdam (2016); Kinman Gallery, London (2015); Marlborough Chelsea, New York; Cookie Butcher, Antwerp; Room East, New York (2013); Saatchi Gallery, London; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale (2012); Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; Untitled, New York; Belice Hertling & Lewis, New York; Office Baroque, Brussels (2011); Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York; New York; Taxter & Spengemann, New York (2010); Ritter/Zamet, London (2009).