

Rusty Shelter

Artemis Herber

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With my sculptures and installations identified as WALLS, COATS, MANTLES, VESSELS or SHELTERS, I constantly explore ideas of how human beings live in spheres, both physical and imagined. Single segments of painted cardboard which create safe, warm realms and remind us of our nature - pliable, easily formed, and changeable, thus simultaneously inclusive, exclusive and interactive. In those playful moments when segments are grouped together, various dynamic relationships form. Each individual segment interacts and communicates with the others, showing the balance between stability and movement, equality and individuality, embracing and defending moments. The relationship between installation and site is energizing; the pieces can be configured endlessly, transforming the same space over and over again. An active relationship also develops between the installation and the viewer who walks through the surprise openings, obtaining new perspectives of the sculptural settings.

The material used is both visibly, imperfectly vulnerable and incredibly unpretentious, a medium that some may even consider 'artless' and simple. Cardboard is a common material with uncommon versatility - mundane, industrial and cheap, yet interactive, global and irreplaceable. Cardboard protects and hides. It is warm, sturdy, dense and thick. Conversely, when I apply my technique of serial and constant scoring, the vulnerability and impermanence of cardboard is unveiled. The cardboard segments are painted in vibrant, metallic or rusty colors. I transform the surface of the material into something that appears different (like metal, leather, or fabric), but the material maintains its reality through its corrugations, its inherent warm quality and its vulnerability and unpretentiousness. Because of their scale, color and surface reflection, they create a strong presence in their environment. With use of a "natural" handmade process, I reduce the product to a minimalist expression in color, form and material, thereby forming

my own language. By repetition and grouping of individual objects, I achieve ever-changing "statement" creating poetry with the result.

SHELTERS (*Figure 1A,B*) series reflects the idea of being visually and emotionally harbored, wrapped in basic tent-like cardboard formation associated with mantles or capes, providing a warm protective haven. Its elementary shape reminds us of a simple, natural and pristine way of life. In this sense it embodies the basic concepts of protection, retreat and introspection.

My paintings (*Figure 2A,B,C*) are derived from common sights in our everyday lives viewed in a different manner: each is familiar, yet banal. When juxtaposed with feelings of alienation, strange atmospheres and dramatic contrasts of light, their uncertainty is highlighted. The uncertainty of a situation, moments of transitory in lost spaces display a paradox of sorts: They are filled to the brim with images; however, they depict deserted spaces of alienated poetry. Exploring options where everything and nothing is possible, create a position between here and there, now and later, between place and space, space and time. In that visual moment, where boundaries seem to dissolve in that relationship of our existence: being in an outer world, which includes inner worlds.

Paintings featuring wind generators (*Figure 2C*), exploring how green technologies have changed landscapes as alternative energy produced by wind generators marks and shapes the environment in a new way. Series of "Giant Sketches" (*Figure 2A,B*) reveal the obvious - themes of the outer belts - crumbling factories, oil containers, blasting power plants, blurring blue skies. I use cardboard's rough, raw aesthetic to invoke the bleakness of city landscapes. Revealing the apparently hidden, I tear and peel layers of paper, unveiling corrugations incorporated into the texture and composition. When disrupted, the shape of the cardboard reflects themes of deterioration. Exaggerated

sizes of cardboard enable me to treat material, paint and physically shape to create a relentless, nearly brutal face of what surrounds us. The use of the artless, raw industrial material of corrugated cardboard correlated with my intentions, and I decided to expand the size of the paintings to extend the importance of my urgent concerns. At the same time, I continue to paint with huge brushes, blades, and giant spatulas in a sketch-like way, expressing the spontaneity of action and reaction within the process on my themes. Thus by keeping the authenticity of the sketch, the sketch itself turns into an autonomous art form.

By mastering the art of "scoring" German-born artist Artemis Herber has devised a way to manipulate her corrugated muse in any direction she desires. Through the process of folding and bending cardboard is transformed and takes on a delicate body language. Herber is an award-winning painter and sculptor whose work has appeared in galleries and museums worldwide. Her international

exhibits include Room Installation at Munich Airport, purchased by the State of Bavaria; Associazione Culturale Piazza, San Placido, Italy; and Kunstverein, Paderborn, Germany. Her work has been exhibited across the U.S. at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the San Jose Museum of Art, Historical Society, Washington DC. Delaware Center for Contemporary Arts in Wilmington, and dozens of other venues. Herber studied fine arts/art education in Germany, and, as a teacher there, received several awards for statewide advanced education and art projects. Since moving to the U.S. in 2002, she has taught for nonprofit community arts organizations and private groups and currently maintains a studio in Baltimore.

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Disclosure: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

A



B



Figure 1 (A) Rusty Shelter; (B) Rusty Shelter_installation



Figure 2 (A) Power Plant; (B) Power Plant_detail; (C) Forest

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