

Academic Abstract

MISTAKING ARTIFICE FOR REALITY

Jenny K. Dowd

Assistant Professor David S. East, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Collections have somber implications. The context imposed onto objects that have been elevated and isolated to the status of a collection is a manufactured one. Commonplace, temporal or captivating objects are relegated to the sterile status of specimens when they are collected for the sake of preservation and study. For me this obsessive act of collecting is disconcerting, yet at the same time strangely satisfying.

In my body of work, *Mistaking Artifice for Reality*, it is precisely this tension between satisfaction, study and obsession that serves as my focus. In this installation the created object has been transformed in a disturbing manner by being isolated, duplicated, measured, organized, studied, broken, preserved and catalogued. An insidious undertone of control saturates the environment in which this study takes place, seeking to cause a shift in the perception of the viewer. The arena and method of study is meant to be unsettling. This installation highlights the obsessive qualities of human nature and the consequences of a devotion that stems from the human penchant for obsessive

collection, dominance, study and control. Once we take objects into our possession and elevate them to the status of being special or prized, the object is transformed into something artificial.