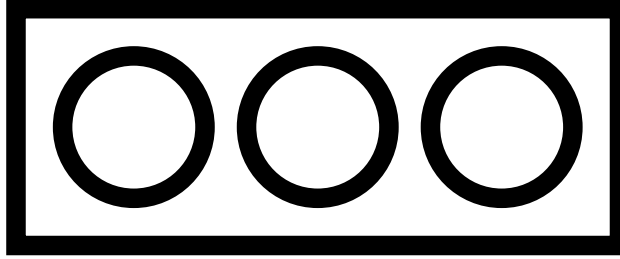


ODYSSEY:

noun

[od·ys·sey]

1. a long wandering or voyage usually marked by many changes of fortune.
2. an intellectual or spiritual wandering or quest.



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ODYSSEY

17. Todd Gray | **37.** Las Nietas Nonó | **49.** Rujeko Hockley and Jane Panetta | **53.** *Goodbye to All that* | **75.** Louis Fratino | **93.** Jessi Reaves | **105.** *Force Majeure* | **121.** Isabelle Huppert | **131.** Chris Ofili | **145.** Juliana Canfield | **155.** Martine Syms | **167.** Caroline Polachek | **179.** *Let Me Take You There* | **201.** The Blaze | **207.** Emily Wilson | **215.** Timur Si-Qin | **225.** Dalad Kambhu | **229.** Gordon Hall | **251.** Roy DeCarava

I met Gordon Hall in 2014, while working as a freelance curator. We were serendipitously paired up by a nonprofit organization to organize a series of "experimental" artist-on-artist conversations, which sought to materialize different ways in which artists could engage in dialogues with, upon, alongside, and through their work—consciously rebuffing discursive formats of talking about their work. Shortly thereafter I was invited to perform in Hall's piece in the exhibition *FLEX* at Kent Fine Art (curated by Orlando Tirado). The performance, *STAND AND* (2014), took place at the handball courts in Chelsea Park, off West 28th Street, where on a warm fall

GORDON HALL

Interview **Andrew Rachel**

Saturday seven performers worked together to continuously move the seven components of a modular sculpture into new configurations, bodies pressed against the wood and fabric panels and the surface of the court itself, responding to sculptural curves, cues from other performers, and the environment—typically reserved for athletic activity, but on that afternoon accommodating a different kind of physical play. The performers in that piece, composed of artists, writers, curators, and other makers, went on to form the initial constituency of a critique group that continues to meet monthly with the express purpose of maintaining a platform for discussing each other's work in a constructive and challenging environment.

I came to know Hall's work through the expansive approach to art discourse that marked our very first collaboration, and a shared commitment to exploring thought materially, collectively, and over long durations. On the eve of Hall's solo exhibition at the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art and a related publication of collected writings from 2011 to 2018, I spoke with Hall about the process of making paired performances and sculptures, tensions between horizons of possibility and artistic intention, and the vulnerability inherent in purposeful action.



Andrew Kachel We are in your studio in Crown Heights, looking west out the window, at a very beautiful pink sunset and pink clouds reflecting in the water on the rooftop, which you pointed out earlier. It made me think about some of the first encounters I had with your work, because some of the things I recall include painted surfaces that are positioned against the wall in some way, presenting almost a shine of color or a reflection on the wall, more a cloudy ethereal presence of color. I’m also thinking about those particular works in dialogue with the works you’ve made for your show at the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, in Portland, Oregon (*THROUGH AND THROUGH AND THROUGH: GORDON HALL*, June 8 to August 10, 2019). Some of which have a much more definite material presence, I would say, if not immediately intelligible forms. There is a certain kind of ambiguity, I think, a certain game in trying to arrive at some possible understanding of them. I don’t think of these new works as having such an obvious component of ephemerality in comparison to those earlier works. Do you think about there being a relation between these works? How has your work changed over the years, and what do you think it carries with it from those earlier works?

Gordon Hall Thank you for those up—it feels good to remember them in the midst of finishing all these new pieces. I made them to be objects where the brightest colors are not visible except as a shadow or a reflection on the wall behind the piece. To me, they always felt like they were facing away from you, backing into the wall and showing you their brightest side only as a trace. I continue to be interested in that feeling, of being drawn to something you can’t directly see, that sense of withholding. I haven’t made any of these reflection works in a couple of years, but I could always return to it. In the case of the show at PICA, the eighteen sculptures are in the center of a 10,000-square-foot space, so the walls really aren’t part of the equation, and those works rely on white walls in order to function. There is, I think, a continuation of this feeling of hiding or facing away in many of the individual works and in the PICA exhibition as a whole. Objects with sides you can’t see—stacked objects, or objects where you can see the trace of a bright color on the bottom, pressed against the floor. And more broadly I’m still pursuing this feeling of both familiarity and strangeness, like encountering an object that has architectural aspects and abstract aspects, or that reminds you of something but isn’t quite that thing. To me it feels very much along the same lines as the shadow works, it’s just a different route to the get there.

AK I’m also interested in how your works come to involve



This page and previous spread
THROUGH AND THROUGH AND THROUGH
installation view, all works 2019 (performance still)

performance in a direct way. Whether you have a clear idea of a performance that will happen with them, or on them, or in conjunction with them, and for some works maybe not. And although it may not be a clear distinction—some works have performative elements and some works do not—it seems like there are indeed works that don’t have performative elements that you made?

GH I always make the objects first and then figure out both if there’s a performance that happens in conjunction with them and if so what it is, what the “in conjunction” is—is a body on it? touching it? with it? or is it around it, in proximity to it, sort of coming from something about it? There are always sculptures that don’t generate performance, which is very important to me. Or, in some instances, there is something that happens with them but it’s very small and easily missed. A small movement, or a sound. For the show at PICA, I am approaching performance in a way I haven’t before. Instead of having a 30-minute or hour-long performance that has an audience that sits down and watches it, the 18 sculptures each generate a very short performance that happens, unannounced, intermittently throughout the day, no more than every 20 minutes, and sometimes less than that. These performances are mostly solos, with a couple of duets and trios as well, and because there are 18 of them, no audience member will see them all. And I’ve been trying some new things. For example, there’s a piece in the show that’s a cast-concrete shim, with ridges on the top and bottom and a cylindrical hole in the middle that goes all the way through, down to the floor. I asked it over and over again what it wanted from me. In the end, it produced a performance in which an ice cube in the shape of a soda can melts on the sidewalk outside the show.

AK The ice cube is the shape of a soda can.

GH Yes, it’s exactly a soda can.

AK You made a mold.

GH: I made a mold of a can and then I poured water in it, and then it makes a beautiful ice-cube can.

AK What is its relationship to that piece?

GH It’s an echo of the cylindrical hole in the sculpture, but as it melts it registers the weather, the temperature, the sun—all of which are parts of the show, which is heavily reliant on the sunlight coming through the skylights and windows. And the slowness of this melting produces a pace which is similar to the patches of light that cross the space, and the slowness of the exhibition as a whole, the pace requested by my work.

AK What other sculptures in the exhibition generated performances that felt like new territory for you or pushed specific performative strategies forward?

GH There’s a piece in the show called “*Facing L’s*” (2019). It’s two waist-high, smooth, L-shaped pieces of painted concrete, and there’s a pencil line down the middle. Anyway, they face each other but they don’t touch—they’re an inch apart, facing (or perhaps back-to-back). The performance that correlates with them is two people walking around the space, around the perimeter of the group of works in a big circle, and all they have to do is walk around at a good clip and keep eye contact with each other as they walk. Will the viewer necessarily know that it correlates with that particular object? Perhaps not, but they do know in a general sense that everything they see in some way has to do with one of the sculptures. In that sense it’s more like the object is setting up a relationship between bodies which is then being turned into this dance. This is one of two performances in which the performers wear their street clothes, perhaps carry a bag, have their phone in their pocket—so it isn’t always apparent that they aren’t just regular people there seeing the show who start doing this linked circular walking. I want some of the performances to not immediately announce themselves as such.

AK We’ve talked about this a lot in the past, you and I and our crit group, and you just alluded to it—these objects dictating what the performances will be, or you waiting for the objects to tell you things, which I think is a really compelling aspect of your work. But I also wonder, after working on these objects and these performances, whether it ends up creating a cyclical dynamic. Whether you’ve ever made an object either in whole or in part as a response to an aspect of performance in your work?

GH I really try to make objects without knowing what, if anything, will be done with them, around them, in relation to them. I’ve disciplined myself not to imagine the performances while I’m making objects. I have to finish them first, then I set them up in a space and try to figure out what they want to happen. Some of them speak more clearly than others, so when it’s finally time, I know right away what it is, what to do. Which is partly based on what I learned about them while making them, the intimacy we established through that. Other sculptures are harder—it takes time, various attempts, or I get stuck. And I have to listen longer to hear from them. The reason I don’t make objects for specific performance ideas is because I am not making props. In typical theatre or dance, if there is an action that needs an object, the action is already known and then



Closed Box with Painted Top
cast concrete, poplar, latex paint



OVER-BELIEFS
cast concrete

the object has to be acquired in order to make that possible. That, from what I understand, is a prop—you need to sit, so a chair has to be gotten. In that dynamic, the person’s need is primary and the object is secondary, a response to that need. It could be any chair, within certain parameters. In my work, I reverse this dynamic. The objects are first and we are responding to their needs. Maybe we are the props?

AK This seems like a real generosity of spirit toward the objects, a kind of reverence for the objects in and of themselves. Allowing the objects to dictate things rather than the objects just *being* things that people use in a functional way. But the objects are also very much things that *you* make. They’re not found objects, even if they have relationships to found objects—and it seems like most of the works in this show do have relationships to objects that hold specific or personal meaning for you.

GH Almost all, there actually is one found object in this show, but that’s...we can talk about that later.

AK Okay ^[laughs], but I wonder then how you think about your role as both a selector of certain forms and as a maker. It’s hard to articulate this, but in elevating the object’s role to something that is equally primary as a performing body, or maybe even that makes a performing body secondary and subject to the object’s demands, there’s also your role as overseer. So, I wonder if there are strategies in your practice in which you try to either account for that or...I know you have so many rules in your practice, ways in which you actively try to work against that sort of, I guess you could call it subjective influence as an artist, on the sculptures and performances you make ^[laughs], which maybe sounds sort of crazy—

GH This is a complicated question. People have often described my work as on the one hand very controlled, even rigid, and on the other hand as generous and open. I would think these modes would be in contradiction with each other, but in the world of my work, perhaps they aren’t. At the root of this is a lifelong effort to figure out how to relate to physical objects, the materiality of the world and our own bodies in it. You know, I come from a very intellectual family, a culture of intellectual values, of prioritizing what our minds can do, including text-based communication, reading and writing, thought. I don’t reject any of these things, but I couldn’t understand the implication that they are immaterial. As a kid, I gathered—and who knows, kids distort things—but I had the impression that if you cared about physical things, you were materialistic, even shallow. As I grew older, I felt like that way of thinking about the status of objects worked less

and less well, because life is filled with things, and I needed a theory of objects that enables me to care about them in a way that isn’t destructive of myself and others, that accounts for our materiality in a physical world. I’ve worked this dilemma out in the studio, cultivating a relationship of care with objects, through making them. As I get to a place in my career where I have more help in the studio, more fabrication support, I never want to be fully separated from the labor of making my own work. Not because I’m interested in work for its own sake, but because the way that I know an object through making it is a particular kind of intimacy and care that I can’t produce any other way. So that’s what’s going on with it for me, and then my hope is that by offering these objects to others, both in the way they’re made, arranged in the space, and then in the way that they’re treated by these performing bodies, that this care for objects will be palpable. This is what I am offering to others, the feeling that every aspect of this universe has been considered. And there is, I hope, something reparative about that relation of care with objects, which is something I’ve written about over the years. What happens when you identify with objects or confuse yourself with an object? After the trauma of all the various forms of nonconsensual objectification that we’ve all experienced—I especially have had a lot of experiences of that in my life—what is it to claim objecthood within a context that I created? I’m creating a universe where objectification happens, but it’s on my terms, with objects I made, with my own body, with the bodies of others who have consented to participate. And in this I find repair, agency, and often pleasure.

AK I think it certainly makes sense to think about your engagement with objects as one that is motivated not least by concerns of care. And I’m interested also in how that plays out in your performances. I think it’s very clear when you perform with your sculptures how that plays out, but I wonder what kind of dialogues you have with others who perform with your works? Because I know you’ve made a lot of performances with friends as performers. I was a performer in your work very shortly after we met. And I think it was only after that point that you started working with other individuals who you knew but maybe weren’t peers, or other performers that you cast specifically for certain pieces. Obviously in these situations there is a choreographic practice, or there are certain discussions, I would imagine, about things that the work is doing. But I also imagine that there is a certain degree of withholding in the interest of not being too dictatorial ^[laughs], holding open a certain amount of space for an individual’s agency or for a particular kind of relation or way of being with an object to unfold. So how do you talk about your performances with the individuals who are performing in them?

GH Well, coming from a dance and improvisation background it feels natural to me to explain and look at and think about moving with other people. But yes, it’s important that performers are being themselves in the work, even if it’s within my constraints, which are sometimes very narrow. So since I’m going to Portland next week to train the 14 performers who will be in this show, I’ve been thinking about how I’m going to approach it. And basically I’m going to show them the 18 performances and they’re going to be able to choose which ones they want to learn. Then the process of them learning it—I make it really clear that they’re not necessarily trying to impersonate me, they’re not a stand-in for me, they’re doing it the way their body does it. So if it’s something really simple, like sitting down in a chair, or something chairlike, people do it incredibly differently, but the way that you do it is the way that feels natural to your body, and if you try to do it like someone else you look really silly. It’s a weird thing, because in some sense I’m training them, but what I’m trying to train them to do, is—

AK To do what they would naturally do? ^[laughs]

GH Yeah, to do what they would naturally do and to be themselves within the constraints of the universe of the work, in which the options are quite limited. The first piece that I made that had strangers performing in it was *The Number of Inches Between Them* (2017–2018, presented at the MIT List Visual Arts Center), and that was because I wanted people who were older, like 70 or 80 years old, for a variety of reasons I can talk about, but in that case especially what I was interested in was the quality of their movement that was being affected by the limitations of a body that is aging and losing various abilities they previously had. So in that case it wasn’t being like, “Okay, you watch me do it and then you do it.” Sometimes it’s just me saying, “Okay so walk over to the sculpture and then sit down.” And saying that is actually more open than me demonstrating it, because then they’re not trying to copy me, they just walk over and sit, the way they would.

AK Who are the performers for the pieces in Portland?

GH They are all people based in Portland that have some connection with PICA. PICA does a lot of performing arts programming, so a lot of them are people who have performance practices of their own, like Sidony O’neal, Linda Austin, Takahiro Yamamoto, and numerous others. And then there are other performers who have very little performance experience. It’s a little bit challenging for me, because when I was working on the piece at MIT I went back and forth to have rehearsals with the people in the



Left
1/
colored pencil on poplar.

Right
Sitting (Brick Object) (III)
collaboration with Octavius Neveaux,
carved brick



Three-part Stool (Cream, Beige, and Green)
cast concrete

piece every weekend for two months. With this, I have just ten days with them. But it's also less daunting than teaching long choreographic phrases, because these performances are so short and some of them are really simple, like holding a pose and very slowly turning your head.

AK Do you know which particular performances individuals have chosen to learn?

GH They haven't chosen yet.

AK They haven't chosen yet.

GH No. But part of letting them choose is wanting it to be consensual. For example, there's one piece in the show that's this castconcrete, painted, hanging bar that's hung at a height so that you hold it over your head, sort of hang on it while kneeling on the floor. So you're kneeling there with your legs open and your arms up, hanging on this thing, and it ends up looking and feeling rather sexual, a sort of erotic objectification, and I certainly want to do that to make sure people can choose one only if they are comfortable being in that position in public.

AK I know that with certain objects, you have relationships with them that are quite complicated and nuanced. And some seem resistant to giving up certain aspects of their natures, as you mentioned. Are there performances for this upcoming show that you still haven't quite figured out? Some that might even change once you're working with performers in the space?

GH Yes, there are a couple I am still working out, and I don't think I will know until I have them arranged in the exhibition. I'll be able to see them in relation to bodies from that long distance away, which will help me understand what I have made and what to do with it. The central piece of this show is this nonfunctional cast-concrete water fountain, which is a copy of a water fountain I pass every day on my way walking to the studio. The show started with the idea to make the fountain, and it's taller than anything else in the show, and I think it's going to be positioned in the front of a group of objects. And I'm trying to understand what it *wants*. It has a little step, and it has a basin...It's the conductor. It's standing in front of the objects, conducting the other objects, so...

AK In one of our last conversations with the crit group we talked about the placement of that piece, even whether it made sense for it to be apart from the rest of the objects. I think you were always thinking about it as somehow having its own unique relation to the other objects.

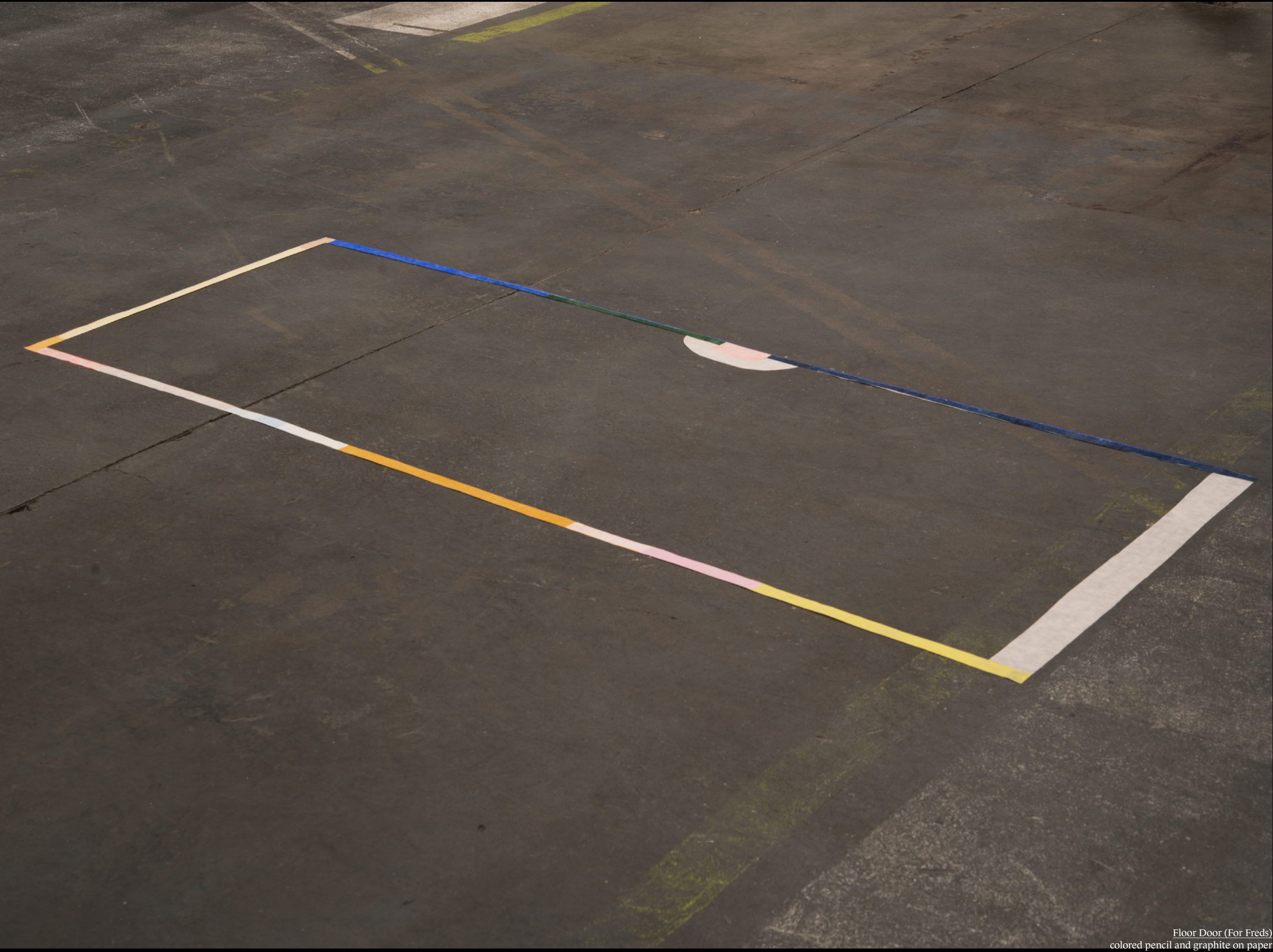
GH Yeah, I can't quite figure out how close or how far it is from the main group, but I do think I want it to be such that it's the first one you see when you come in, and it's right in the front. So these are things that are getting figured out in relation to its placement, this sense of it watching all the other things ^[laughs]. I keep imagining someone reading, aloud, or to themselves, next to it or in the corner of the gallery across the room...I'm not sure yet.

AK Could you describe the relationship between your practice of making sculptures and performances and your writing practice? You have a pretty prolific practice as a writer, which is related to your work as an artist. I know it's a bit of a false dichotomy because in some regards these are not separate endeavors...In fact, they're probably not distinguishable in any real sense other than—

GH I get to wear my clean clothes for one of them.

AK Yeah, exactly. So there's a sartorial difference ^[laughs]. But a lot of your performances involve texts that you have written or texts that you have edited from various sources. So I wonder whether that is a distinction that you think about. Like how and when to involve your writing in your performance or to put your writing in direct dialogue with objects you made. Or if it's more intuitive?

GH For me writing is like the access road that goes along the highway, which is the objects I am making. Running parallel and occasionally intersecting. Like we were talking about before, working on both in such a way as to complicate the division between intellectual and physical work. I'm thinking about the materiality of spoken and written language, about what it can be to speak from your body to other bodies, or what teaching and learning is in a material way, and my work on lecture performances—both making them and also organizing other people to do them—comes out of this interest. I love that dual meaning of the word “reading”. What we do with a text or as an aspect of vision and identification. Trying to complicate the read. It's not that I don't understand writing and making to be distinct, but in the moments where I want to put a performance script with an object, for example, I'm thinking about the ways a projected voice is vibrating in a room and actually taking up the space between the mouth it comes out of and the ears that it's going into, or the body that feels these vibrations. Or thinking about the ways that when we hear people's words we are hearing their meaning, physically. We're being affected by their meaning. Like someone tells you something horrible and your heart starts beating, you're sweating—all the different ways that these distinctions between different realms are actually not



Floor Door (For Freds)
colored pencil and graphite on paper



Parallelogram Bench (for Dennis)
cast concrete

operational in our everyday lives. We just think they are.

AK Yes, and I think sometimes an encounter with objects you’ve made can definitely provoke a similar feeling of being startled, or being aroused, or, I don’t know… hearing something and not understanding it. Similarly, seeing something and not understanding it. I think especially the works in this show function in all those registers to different degrees.

GH Well, it works the other way for me too. Like, for example, What are the similarities and differences between arranging paragraphs in an essay and arranging sculptures in an exhibition? When I arrange sculptures in an exhibition I am thinking about what path the person is taking, in a narrative sense. Like which objects do I want them to see first, second, third, and also lines of sight and which objects are held together in them. But thinking that way felt very freeing as a way of writing, too. Arranging the sentences and paragraphs in a text like the sculptures in an exhibition. Arriving at them in an order but without it necessarily being explained to a reader why it is ordered in that way, right?

AK Right.

GH Or there’s the possibility that somebody could walk around the room in a different way than you, and they always will.

AK Right, certainly less possible with reading texts, but that would be interesting. Although sometimes your texts also have… I guess you could say almost a resonance with something like concrete poetry? Or at least they have specific forms that are not necessarily what one would find in narrative writing or critical writing. Words on a page that don’t function in a linear way.

GH For me as a reader and a viewer, so much of my ability to keep my attention on something has to do with trusting the way the maker is putting these things in proximity to each other, even if it isn’t totally clear to me what is going on. Feeling like I believe the arrangement, the decisions, the inclusions and omissions, even as the reasons for them may remain opaque. And, so, just as I wouldn’t want to make a sculpture exhibition where you come to an object and you think, Where the hell did this come from?” or This has nothing to do with the universe that was being created for me by these other objects that I am already dealing with,” I always try to write in such a way that I don’t break the trust of my reader by suddenly giving them something that falls so outside of the logic of the piece that it feels arbitrary or aggressively impenetrable. Even when things are difficult I never want the viewer or the reader to lose the thread of trust

in me, the sense of intentionality, the feeling that every arrangement is one of the right formations of the work.

AK I’m sure that value of trust was something that guided the compilation of your writing that PICA published in conjunction with their exhibition, *OVER-BELIEFS: Gordon Hall Collected Writing, 2011–2018* (2019). What was it like looking back on nearly a decade of writing, especially alongside the process of putting together the exhibition?

GH This is my first experience of seeing all my writing in one volume, which has felt really big in a bunch of different ways. I arranged the book nonchronologically, and it’s also not organized by the categories of the entries—the essays, performance scripts, and interviews are interwoven throughout and I ordered them in an athematic manner. I went through and read everything and pulled out various strands, and I tried to put them in an order that would bring people through the kinds of ideas and logics and the ways of working that are evoked in the texts. And then Roya Amirsoleymani and Kristan Kennedy wrote such thoughtful introductions to the book and Sarah Workneh wrote a beautiful foreword. I’m still processing it but it’s really wild. Seeing my work digested and explored by other people who I admire so much. Another thing I’ve had the chance to reflect on—over these years as I did this writing, I often felt unsure of where I was going, wondering if I had gone totally out on a limb or severed my connections to my past work. But now, when I read it all together, it’s actually a quite cohesive set of ideas. There are different tendrils that go out into new places, but they always loop back to my central concerns. The earliest thing in the book is a lecture-performance called *Extremely Precise Objects of Ambiguous Use* (2011), which deals with religious ritual, and shared subcultures of nonnormative beliefs. Those ideas resurfaced in a really big way in the work I made for the Renaissance Society last year, *Brothers and Sisters* (2018), which drew on thinking about the Shakers and their understanding of craftsmanship as a form of prayer. It wasn’t clear to me in the moment how much I have actually worked on a pretty limited set of questions and problems—

AK And maybe variations on certain themes or different approaches to the same thing. When you look at this collection do you feel a sense of closure? Or a certain sense of things being worked out, and wanting to move on to new questions? Or does it feel as if this is one particular phase of investigations that are very much ongoing?

GH It doesn’t really make me want to move on to new questions, but it makes me want to be a lot more intentional and motivated around how I approach them. Most of the writing

was done in response to invitations, and going forward I am planning on being more in charge of what I want to write about. There are historical artists I still haven’t researched and written about that I really want to, like Beverly Buchanan, Louise Nevelson, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Lygia Pape, and Melvin Edwards, to name a few.

AK I want to go back for a minute to something you mentioned about arranging sculptures and writing—the idea of “one of the right formations.” I was thinking about some of the works you’ve made that involve pieces being taken apart and moved around—

GH Yes, the one you were in, *STAND AND* (2014).

AK Yes, and also the piece with the handheld objects—

GH *AND PER SE AND* (2016).

AK *AND PER SE AND* was for the most part an exhibition on a table top, and *STAND AND* was one multipart sculpture that was specifically made with the intention of being moved around, and had two bookends and—how many, six or seven?

GH Seven.

AK Seven moveable components that were stacked between large bookends.

GH Right.

AK So in a way that work is a great example of a work that to an extent dictates its own potential movements, in that it sort of looks like two pieces that are holding together a bunch of other pieces that are stacked in a row. But I’m looking at other pictures in your studio right now, the way some of your performances with your objects literally look like you are holding them, maybe almost about to move them but maybe you don’t—and then I’m thinking about other artists who engage static or even more flexible artworks in ways that involve the objects being moved around within exhibition spaces. And it seems like that is a type of movement and a kind of performance that you seem to shy away from, almost as if the objects as you’ve installed them have their places that *they* really like, and *you* really like, and it’s so considered, this order of objects—so intentional. But this makes me wonder to what degree spontaneity is something you think about or struggle with. I mean, I really don’t think about much in your work as being left open to chance. Other than your encounters with objects that you might remake, for example.

GH Well, and the bodies of the other performers who aren’t me. There is actually a lot of chance in that.

AK Oh, that’s a good point.



Fold (III)
hand-dyed cotton



Foreground
[Kneeling Object III \(Poplar\)](#)
waxed carved poplar

Midground
[Turned Hanging Bar \(Beige\)](#)
laquered cast concrete

Background
[Three-part Stool](#)
(Cream, Beige, and Green)
cast concrete

GH Because people are so unpredictable.

AK Sure.

GH I do feel good in this universe I’m making, in which there are not a lot of unpredictable moving parts. But I think that’s actually not the main thing. I am of course interested in what actually happens in the performances with the objects, but what I am almost more interested in is a viewer wondering about what will or did or could happen with them. I remember last time our crit group was here and we were talking about it, I was saying, “I kind of wish that the performances only happened when the museum was closed, and all the audience knew was that they do happen.” And someone was like, “Well, why won’t you just do that?” That’s a degree of withholding that feels extreme even for me, but that feeling of looking at a thing and speculating about how a body would engage with it, speculating about its use — that feeling is more interesting to me than the performance, because the performances in themselves always already are only one possible option. So with the thing being moved, yes it can be moved from point A to point B, but it also could have been moved into a lot of other places, and I guess I am more interested in the wondering about it being moved. One of my favorite artworks is Imi Knoebel’s *Raum 19* (1986), which is at Dia:Beacon. I’ve never seen it being rearranged — ever — I just know that I’ve gone and it *has been* rearranged. And when I see it and I know that it has rearrangeability as part of its fundamental identity, that feels really, really interesting to me and more compelling than watching a performance in which people rearrange it. Do you know what I mean? So there is that feeling of latency and possibility. To return to where this question started, do I want to live in a world without spontaneity? No, not at all. What I am interested in is always feeling that there is, at any moment, the potential for a lot of different actions or ways of understanding something to occur, and that even when that potential is not realized, the feeling of it — to be hyperbolic — that feeling of possibility can be the difference between life and death. Because you need to feel like even when you can’t act on any of them, there are options, and if you don’t feel like there are any options...

AK Then you’re done.

GH You’re just done. And I’ve been in that place rather often in my life. So I think that the feeling of possibility, even unrealized possibility, can be somehow more nourishing or vital than watching the possibility unfold.

AK And that’s probably not an easy thing, for you to assume

the mantle of a certain degree of control over the objects and their arrangement in order to maximize that effect. Do you know what I mean? It’s almost like in order to set the stage for that feeling of possibility — and I’m specifically thinking about how a viewer might perceive things — it seems that one of the most significant aspects of your role as an artist working with sculpture, and working with performance, is to not be afraid to be extremely precise and possibly very controlling about your objects, and about your presentation of those objects. With the end goal of presenting something that is radically open and able to communicate a sense of openness. You are trying to sense the ways in which certain arrangements, certain shapes, and certain gestures can provide this sense of possibility. And in order for that to happen, you actually have to be very precise.

GH That’s exactly right.

AK It’s not a contradiction necessarily, but it’s an interesting tension.

GH Thank you so much for articulating this, this effect I am hoping that the precision in my work produces. I like when people dress up for parties. Some people think it seems stuffy and pretentious, to dress carefully for even a casual get-together. To me, it seems, I guess, brave? When you dress up to go to an event, what you’re indicating is that you didn’t end up there by accident. You went home, you took a shower, you planned it out, you ironed your clothes, you went. And if it’s not fun, if you end up standing there by yourself awkwardly, you can’t pretend that you weren’t excited to go. Because you were. And there’s a vulnerability in that caring that to me has always been very moving.



Sitting (Brick Object) (III)
collaboration with Octavius Neveaux,
carved brick (performance still)