

FLASH ART



Luchita Hurtado, *Untitled*, 1970. Oil on canvas. 30 x 50 in.

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herself with some spectral timekeeper. She punctuated the performance with spoken-word descriptions of people ingesting chemicals, wondering aloud what effects such absorptions might produce. At some point I realized that the materials Nkanga was sifting through must be filling the gallery, even though I couldn't see any particulate matter with my naked eyes. I was struck by the fact that I didn't know what I was breathing.



4 GORDON HALL

MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge
By Dana Kopel

Two groups of off-white concrete panels of varying geometric shapes are the sole occupants of the small gallery in Gordon Hall's exhibition at the MIT List Visual Arts Center. Some lean against the wall while others are assembled into a structure resembling a fort or bench. These two sculptures are each other's double: one an unconstructed version of the other, a replica of a bench-cum-artwork by the late, little-known artist Dennis Croteau, which Hall first encountered in a friend's yard in New Jersey.

The spare exhibition also includes a poster that visitors are invited to take (it features a photograph of Croteau's original bench and, on the reverse side, an undeliverable letter Hall wrote to him) and an afternoon performance presented in

the space. Hall often interweaves sculpture and performance, making minimalist objects specifically to explore how bodies respond to them. The performance at the List Center, a version of which was presented at a barn in Maine last year, began with one performer – an older person in black trousers and a spring jacket, carrying a practical handbag – standing up from the front row of the audience to sit, facing us, on the sculpture. Then Hall, the youngest of the performers by several decades, moved around, atop, and through the structure, sitting upon and gripping parts of it or else lying face down, head resting on a board as if it were a pillow. Each of the five performers took turns enacting series of repeated movements in response to the sculpture, with Hall later announcing hour marks – from one to twelve o'clock – while shifting positions, creating a sort of abstract sundial. The room was otherwise quiet, the tone slow and deliberate; the performers' audible breathing shifted focus onto my own breathing, my own body.

Together, the sculptures and the performance are titled *The Number of Inches Between Them* (2017–18), after an interview with artist Scott Burton, a major reference in Hall's practice who, like Croteau, passed away from AIDS-related complications in 1989. Burton frequently worked with furniture forms (he made the benches in the List Center's atrium), as does Hall, as a means of thinking about the body relationally: how bodies move through space and become legible (or not) through interaction. In a conversation after the performance with art historian David Getsy, Hall reflected that “every piece of furniture conjures a ghost – a body that uses it.” That ghost or absence feels especially palpable in this exhibition, as it traces not only the physical space between people and things, but also the temporal gap that separates those of us present from Croteau, Burton, and countless others lost to AIDS – and the grief and longing that rest there.



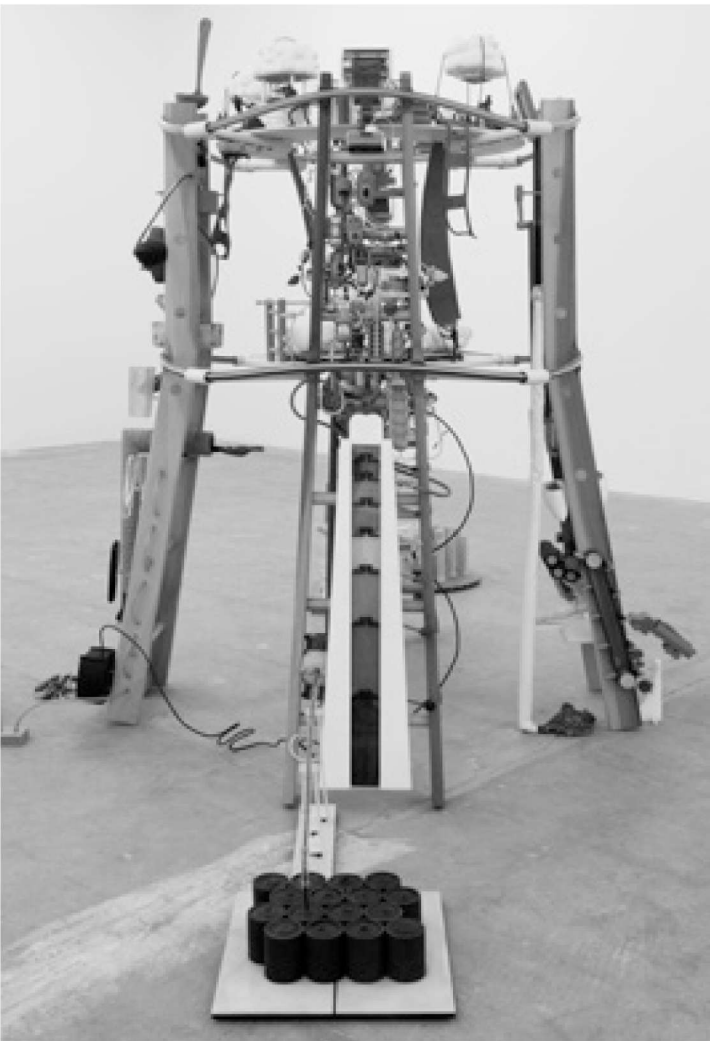
3 Otobong Nkanga, *Social Consequences II-Construction*, 2009. Acrylic and stickers on paper. 16½x17⅞ in.

Courtesy of Paul van Esch & Partners Collection, Amsterdam.

4 Gordon Hall, *The Number of Inches Between Them*, 2017. Pigment cast concrete, color poster multiple; performance, 39 min.

Performers: Mary Bok, Gordon Hall, Mike Peterson, Lou Desautels, Danny Harris. Photography by Cassandra Rodriguez. Courtesy of the artist.

5 Benjamin Reiss, *Package Factory (Natural Marriage of Natural Resources)*, 2016–18. Wood, MDF, epoxy, acrylic, PVC, ABS, styrene, urethane, latex, vinyl, Papier-mâché, concrete, plaster, copper, steel, sculpey, wires, graph paper, hula hoops, party toothpicks, plastic cups, funnels. 58x95x93 in. approximately. Courtesy of the artist.



5 BENJAMIN REISS
Package Factory (Natural Marriage of Natural Resources)

Bel Ami, Los Angeles
By Keith J. Varadi

Benjamin Reiss's exhibition “Package Factory (Natural Marriage of Natural Resources)” is simultaneously one of excess and refinement, genuine in its ingenuity and sardonic with its sincerity. What you see is what you get, but in order to get it all, you must seek it all.

The show centers around an eponymous sculpture (2016–18), a multitiered wooden structure housing an epic game of chutes and ladders. On the upper circuit, playfully primary-colored epoxy clay miniatures work together in the first scene of a staged simulation of a total industrial complex – agriculture, health care, infrastructure, technology, and transportation are all illustrated along the infernal descent. The figures lift, carry, and unload various widgets and wares; we see where the items are going, but to what end and why? Equal parts plastic army toys and corporate pharma logos, they conceivably embody the coalescence of military and commercial interests in twenty-first-century globalization. On the next tier down, more doodled dudes engage in futile

exercises, lowering cottony cloudlike “dream products” with cables, setting them on a circular railroad track to nowhere, reminiscent of the holiday season at an outdoor mall. On the ground level, carrots are plucked and planted, and even turned into baby carrots.

There is an impressive DIY sensibility to this three-dimensional world the artist has created, with everything seemingly made by hand, aside from the two slightly warped hula hoops that function like planetary rings around a cartoonishly chaotic ecosphere. Reiss mocks the brand of Marxism taught in art schools, while concurrently critiquing the capitalism that controls so many of the creative decisions of these programs' graduates.

There is no waste – that is the thesis, evidenced by the copious sheets of “research” hanging on the walls, which serve as blueprints for what's on display. They contain messages like “I don't care who you are or what size you are im gonna magnetize you.” To whom is Reiss speaking, and what does this mean? Here, it appears he is simply dictating to himself, his own personal secretary. But who is dictating to the doodled dudes? The meta-metaphors climb and shoot ad infinitum in the package factory.

6 WOLFGANG STOERCHLE
“before you can pry any secrets from me”

Overduin & Co., Los Angeles
By Thomas Duncan

In 1962, Wolfgang Stoerchle (1944–1976) filmed and photographed his horseback journey from Toronto to Los Angeles. Though documented for personal record, Stoerchle later dubbed the expedition a monumental performance. Such self-mythologizing is peppered throughout the artist's compelling if uneven output, which includes painting, sculpture, performance, fictional news, and video. Tragically, a car accident cut his life short at the age of thirty-two. In lieu of a warranted museum survey, Overduin & Co.'s recent exhibition, astutely curated by Paris-based editor and publisher Alice Dusapin, makes up for institutional lag.

After middling forays into painting and sculpture, Stoerchle began leaning toward performance and was soon drawn to video. It was through this medium that the artist hit his stride, exploring its potential as both an archive of performance and a conduit for technological experimentation. Happily, the Overduin show was largely dedicated to this facet of Stoerchle's output. Particularly noteworthy was *Crawling out of clothes* (1970–72), in which the artist set up an interconnected series of cameras and monitors, creating a mise-en-abyme of registration, display, and re-registration through which the