

VISUAL ART

Jessica Stockholder

by Tara Marshall

1. Installation view of "Anne Truitt: Sculpture 1962-2004" at Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, 2010. © Estate of Anne Truitt / The Bridgeman Art Library. Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

2. Anne Truitt, *Gloucester*, 1963, acrylic on wood, 73 1/2 x 72 x 13". © Estate of Anne Truitt / The Bridgeman Art Library. Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

3. Jessica Stockholder, *Untitled (8688)*, 2008, mixed media on paper, 19 1/2 x 27 3/8". Courtesy Barbara Edwards Contemporary, Toronto.

heft that is bodily and powerful. The ample space surrounding this stand-alone piece begins to take on a hue all its own.

Indeed, as Truitt explains in *Daybook: The Journal of an Artist*, 1982, the first of her three published journals, "the color itself is set free into space and into the ever-moving sun, which marks time. And color is the least material of matter: vibration as light." What becomes clear is that Truitt held a converse relationship to material and to making: the more she laboured, the less material the resultant artworks became. It was colour that transported the wooden structures of the columns into an immaterial, even spiritual, realm. It is this sense that is most palpable when you are standing amidst the work. There are no gimmicks here. There is only evidence that the artist spent a lifetime working to refine a process of translating complex experiences into forms that appear so simple. ■

"Anne Truitt: Sculpture 1962-2004" was exhibited at Matthew Marks Gallery in New York from May 8 to June 26, 2010.

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Jessica's Stockholder's work is known for using everyday objects and brightly coloured plastic consumer products to create art that basks in its "objectness." Her work engages with modes of production that support contemporary consumer culture while simultaneously turning this system on its head. When repurposed, these objects lose their functionality and become virtually unrecognizable.

Her installations cross the boundaries separating sculpture, painting and installation and are sometimes called "paintings in space." The moderately sized works on paper (the largest pieces are just over 22 by 30 inches), shown at Barbara Edwards Contemporary, can be similarly described as "sculpture on paper." They assert the primacy of space in a way that is almost three dimensional. In these untitled works, created between 1998 and 2010, spirals and orbs dominate, with the occasional square, rectangle and triangle added. Some pieces are collages in themselves and some are working sketches of installation pieces. The collages include fabric, cotton

batting and sometimes photographs, along with painting and drawing with pencil and coloured pencil. As opposed to traditional painting, which typically covers the canvas, Stockholder's works on paper leave bare some, or much, of the background, creating a productive interplay between positive and negative space that is usually the domain of sculpture. When colour appears, it is what we have come to expect from Stockholder—bright, almost DayGlo pinks, blues and greens. These are colours harvested from the palette of the big box store rather than from nature.

Stockholder's emphasis on space and colour might suggest that these works are purely formal investigations, but to look at them as such would be to miss the most important part: the way they lay bare and glory in the essential physical process of art making and actually subvert traditional formalism. The work unveils the discomfort, struggle, unease, insecurity and also the fun involved in making art, things that often remain hidden behind a finished piece of art but are so satisfying to see. The glimpse we are given is a privileged one that

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Larry Glawson

by Alison Gillmor

imbues the work with a sense of intimacy, a sense that is also heightened by the fact that, in order to experience it fully, you are required to spend time and get up close.

The working drawings insist on careful investigation. Handwritten notes are visible, such as “heavy thing” to denote a supporting base and, more specifically, “folded blankets holding painted squares.” In some cases these drawings morph into artworks in their own right with the additions of paint and collage elements. Stockholder challenges basic tenets of formalism in the work by replacing and substituting certain elements with others. For example, in one of the more minimal works, she uses texture as form by elegantly layering figured white paper on top of flat white background paper.

In the PBS artist interview series ART:21, Stockholder said that her art offers the possibility of experiencing a world beyond ours, beyond the everyday, although her work is made of ordinary or everyday things. I would add that this world offers visual pleasure and aesthetic elation, but it’s not empty pleasure. Instead it is a world filled with free-form thoughts that don’t need defining but can just be experienced in the moment. It is also a world of imagination in which most of us, including artists, don’t spend enough time. It’s a world that feels secret and special when you are in it, where you do want to take your time and linger. ■

“Jessica Stockholder” was exhibited at Barbara Edwards Contemporary in Toronto from May 21 to July 10, 2010.

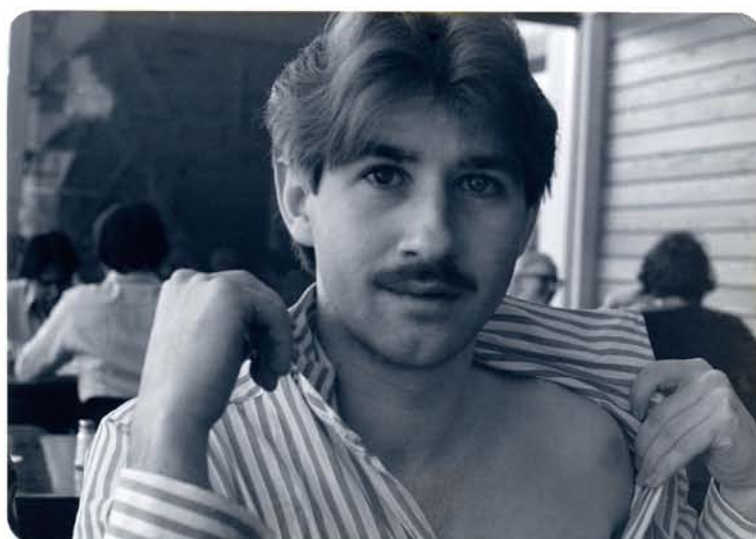
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The work of Larry Glawson has always been a quiet response to the Modernist idea that creativity and domesticity are inherent enemies. In this revealing retrospective of Glawson’s photography, curator J J Kegan McFadden hits on a way of tying together 27 pieces that span three decades and six distinct bodies of work. All of the images—from a casual, candid snapshot in 1979 to a large-scale digitally manipulated nude portrait in 2010—centre on one subject: Glawson’s long-time partner, the artist and writer Doug Melnyk.

theatrically posed or seemingly unaware, standing on the dock at the family cottage or dressed in a gorilla suit. Melnyk’s role as Glawson’s recurring motif is poignant: he’s caught at photography’s paradoxical junction of the instantaneous and the everlasting. A single image may freeze him as heartbreakingly young: we first see Melnyk as a skinny kid with feathered hair and a quintessentially ’70s moustache in *Untitled (Doug showing hickey)*. Taken together, though, the photographs reveal the gradual encroachments of time and age. In one of the most recent works—taken from

1. Larry Glawson, *Untitled (Doug showing hickey)*, 1979, black-and-white silver print, 3.5 x 5". Collection of the artist. Courtesy the artist.

2. Larry Glawson, *Doug in Gorilla Costume*, 1986, black-and-white silver print, 30 x 30". From the “Self Portraits Project.” Collection of Dave Grywinski. Courtesy the artist.



More than a clever organizing principle, this approach actually goes to the heart of Glawson’s oeuvre, which is the rich, unpredictable connection between everyday life and art. Moving between home and work, between the mundane and the sneakily sublime, the veteran Winnipeg artist explores the ways in which deeply personal matters—identity, affiliation, love—are publicly presented through photography.

With his expressive body language and endearing face, Melnyk is a dream subject, whether he’s

the significantly titled series “home bodies”—Melnyk is standing naked in the living room of the apartment he shares with Glawson. In the half-caressing pose of one of Michelangelo’s slaves, he is now defiantly middle aged.

Glawson’s photographs often invite us into the living room. Domesticity is under-represented in art, gay domesticity even more so, and curator McFadden clearly views the work as a queer re-visioning of the family album. (The exhibition’s title is a riff on “27 X Sonia: Portraits by Walter Gramatté,” a 1992