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THE SNOZZLE FACTORY

Jeremy Michael Lampe

18 Pages

The "Snuzzle Factory" is a sculptural installation that includes glass, clay, metal, wood and cast paper. It is a representation of an imaginary factory that produces objects that are to be determined by the viewer. The portrayal of time, decay and movement are the primary goals of this installation. It is my attempt to transport the viewer to a different world.

KEYWORDS: Glassblowing, Glass, Sculpture, Installation

THE SNOZZLE FACTORY

JEREMY MICHAEL LAMPE

A Supportive Statement Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

School of Art

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THE SNOZZLE FACTORY

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J. M. L.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

My work has always been an investigation of the many different relationships between Man and Nature - a study of the delicate balance between these two forces. One force is desperately trying to survive while one is trying to exploit the other. My understanding of this relationship is now somewhat bitter, although the beginning was much more innocent and positive. I had a curiosity of how things worked together to create a much larger system involving the world around us and the choices we make. It is the choices that I think about most, and what causes us to make them. This curiosity goes back as far as I can remember. When I started this supportive statement, I originally traced my inquisitiveness back to going to my dad's workplace when I was about ten years old. I was captivated by all the happenings in the boiler room where his office was located. I would roam around and look at all the moving parts, the hissing compressors and the other equipment that I didn't understand. I just knew they kept the building going. I was behind the scenes, underground in awe. I remember how loud it was, the smell of grease, and heat everywhere.

Over this past winter break, I found a book my dad gave me when I was two years old. This book featured me starring as an astronaut flying through space meeting new life. As the main character, I discovered a planet that ended up being a machine run by little aliens, and as it turned out, the planet was a machine that could produce anything you could imagine. The book illustrations included pictures of this machine, the aliens, and the objects they made in their factory. The second I flipped the page and saw the drawings within, I was hit with a flood of memories. Each new page brought these memories back. I can remember constantly flipping

through the book, thinking that was the most amazing thing I had ever seen. So here I am now, making a “factory” that creates objects from my imagination. The storyline for the book that I was so fascinated by as a child comes to life as my thesis show comes together.



Fig. 1. Linksus

CHAPTER II: MATERIALS AND MEDIA

During my first year at ISU, I worked primarily with hot glass. It was mostly blown or solid sculpted. As the semesters passed, I began to include other materials or at least use other materials in the process of making. I incorporated the use of cast abaca, a sustainable paper from South America. I cast the abaca onto ceramic vessels that were thrown on the wheel. The abaca is applied to the surface of the ceramic molds where it can dry and later be peeled off like a glove. The use of a lightweight material like abaca opened up the door for me to increase in scale. I was able to make large forms that weighed just a few pounds. I could attach large forms to the ceiling and wall with very little engineering and anchors, allowing me to focus more on form and less on figuring out how to support something extremely heavy. Combined with fabricated wooden structures, the abaca and wood began to represent the machines that would be found in my “factory.” These machines were the working part of the factory where my glass and ceramic objects would be made.

While the glass pieces are free-formed without the use of any molds, the ceramic forms were made from plaster molds. Some of the glass forms are similar to one another, but each has their own unique subtleties. The repetitive ceramic forms made with a mold are similar to each other but still retain some individuality. I chose to leave some of the flashing from the mold to really drive this mass-produced ideology that would be found within a factory setting where similarities are often strived for.



Fig. 2. Installation

CHAPTER III: BREAKDOWN

The forms in my work stem primarily from my imagination and are informed by factories, industrial landscapes, and electrical and HVAC systems. I have made this work with a sense of purpose as if my forms were to be used to fulfill a specific task, or an object being made as some kind of tool, or a material being pushed through and oozing through dies in order to make a specific product.

One area that I have focused on in this investigation is movement. Movement can be many things. It can be the movement of rocking back and forth in a chair. Walking your dog around the block. Electricity racing through a wire or water down a stream. People being transported on a train. Your last meal traveling through your body. There are endless examples of movement and during each semester I have been investigating the different possibilities.



Fig. 3. Noodle Walker

CHAPTER IV: DYNAMORPHISM

At the beginning of the twentieth century, two groups of artists that embarked on a new and groundbreaking direction: the Italian Futurists and the Surrealists. Both adopted a way of thinking and producing art that rejected the historical constructs of how a painting or a sculpture should be made, which was most often defined by creating an imitation of what the artist was looking at. Both groups had their own distinct ways of breaking down their subjects and applying their new ideas to the ultimate artwork.

Dynamism, which was appropriated by the Italian Futurists as one of their main defining characteristics, is the sense of speed and urgency showing a frame-by-frame view through the repetition of the subject's outline during transit, always moving and not standing still. This concept of dynamism is most famously interpreted by Giacomo Balla's painting, *Dog on a Leash, Leash in Motion* (Apollino, *Futurist Manifestos*, 88). Their paintings and sculptures portrayed shapes in space, full of lines and forms connecting everything together. There would no longer be a definitive outline of a person walking or a car moving. The movement itself of an object from Point A to Point B became a solid image. A record of this object moving through time and space all at once was captured as you would see it in real life. This way of painting was an attempt to create atmospheric forms showcasing movement in one image. The idea of dynamism was an exciting new way to look at things, as it represented how our eyes see things in real life. Being able to put that to paper was such a groundbreaking way of observation. When you watch a dog run, you see motion that is constant and active. In a fraction of a second, the front legs and the back legs come and go several times, yet when a running dog is drawn

over and over again, you can always count four legs in the picture, even if that isn't what the eye sees when the dog is running.

Surrealism also introduced a new way of thinking about making new work. Surrealists wanted to embrace their inner thoughts, dreams, and ideas and use them for inspiration to come up with new content. They would combine different images and ideas and bring them together morphing from one object to another creating a new form. Sometimes these images were completely from the artist's imagination and other times, the images referenced a familiar object. There was no set rule for what imagery could be used. There was a sense of familiarity, and at the same time, there was a feeling like you were looking at something brand new.

My first reaction to trying to make dynamic work was to simply add thirty legs to a piece. This would be my first "idiotic" attempt at portraying dynamism. I say idiotic because that's how Umberto Boccioni described people who thought adding more legs to a subject would make something more dynamic (Apollino, *Futurist Manifestos*, 93). It's still one step ahead of my previous attempts at capturing movement in an otherwise inanimate sculpture. I would normally try to portray a piece in an almost frozen state, as if this thing was just walking around and was now, all of the sudden, standing still. It would have three legs and suggest movement. There are no real recognizable forms, yet they have a familiar feel.

I try not to be influenced by any one particular object or person and I've always tried to keep it obscure and let the audience come up with their own inferences. I have never liked work in which the artist predetermined what I am to think of it. Consequently, I have turned away from some of my favorite work the moment the artist opens up their mouth and starts talking

about it. I believe art should be interpreted differently by each individual person who engages with it. I get ideas from people telling me what they think my work is about, and I when the dog is running.

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from some of my favorite work the moment the artist opens up their mouth and starts talking about it. I believe art should be interpreted differently by each individual person who engages with it. I get ideas from people telling me what they think my work is about, and I follow that new perspective, letting it lead to something unexpected. I've always embraced accidents that happen in the process of making. I see mistakes as a way to make something less contrived. I want my work to raise more questions than answers and to spark an internal investigation within the viewer rather than giving them a quick and easy conclusion.



Fig. 4. Dynamo Hum

CHAPTER V: THE CURRENT FUTURE

Working together with a team ranging from 2-6 people, we follow a somewhat choreographed one-shot maneuver that is open to suggestion, change and spontaneity. One-shot means that the piece is heated one last time and then stretched or blown beyond the capacity of the equipment at which point it must be put away immediately before it explodes. These pieces rely on everybody working in tandem and reacting in real time to what one another is doing. I am pushing the limits on what the studio can handle as well as what my team and I can handle physically. Each piece pushes us to our limits while we sweat through this investigation of form.



Fig. 5. Rubber Floor

Some of these forms were shaped from solid glass by pulling and stretching them in different directions. I worked with solid sculpted glass as a way to force myself out of the traditional glass blowing technique and discover new ideas from a new process. I see this as a form of automatism, another technique borrowed from the Surrealists where they would let outside elements dictate the direction of the piece in an attempt to create less contrived work that is spontaneous and responsive to its environment. Continuing this practice of working spontaneously, I shifted back to the glass blowing technique, applying the same experimental processes as solid sculpting. The result was extremely different. Those forms still embody the sense of movement I strive for but they do it in a completely different way. The solid forms were elegant and graceful, but the blown forms give a feeling of uneasiness and come closer to some of my earlier concepts of the human impact on the environment and nature.

There are biomechanical elements in this work. I'm suggesting that the glass end caps on some of blown forms are meant to mimic an insulator and are the human impact on this biomorphic form, our imprint on an organic creature that has changed due to our influence.

Following some of the practices taken from Surrealism, the forms seem as if they could be a part of some distant world that is somewhat similar to ours. It is slightly recognizable, and yet still something that your eyes haven't seen before.

Another direction I investigated in my thesis work was a repeated form of hanging links suspended from the ceiling. The larger stretched forms allude to a more individual or singular movement. The links suggest a larger system working in tandem to complete a task. I am thinking about ants traveling in a path or, in human terms, the handles on a

subway transporting singular individuals together in a group. I am also thinking about them as a form of tread for an army tank or a bulldozer. The first idea suggests the possibility of movement, construction and life; the latter suggests movement, destruction and death. Life represented by the transporting of people from Point A to B on their way to work to provide for themselves, and death is usually accompanied with the tank tread in most instances.

Through the repetition of form, I am able to create a piece that can potentially go on forever (and even forgo a beginning or end) if the links are physically connected into a loop like a tank tread.

All of the work for this thesis project is an investigation of concepts and an exploration of finding different ways to finish each piece, and the stretched solid forms best exemplifies this. For one of the solid forms, I built a pedestal in order to try to make a connection between the work and some of my ideas pertaining to the relationships between humans and their impact on their environment. The pedestal was an attempt to create an environment or home for this piece. The pedestal was an absurd sort of chaise lounge and an attempt to take the form and make it fit into our world. In two other examples, the pieces were finished differently. On one of these forms, I applied liquid rubber to the tips. The other I ground and polished. Repetition of these forms suggests a singular beginning. They multiply into a group, and then move as one whole. Also and alternatively, in some cases the piled up and discarded forms suggest a termination of movement, a temporary stopping point before being repurposed and worked back into the system.

As previously mentioned, my work has always had its roots in this battle between man

and machine vs. nature. The forms are a direct result of our influence on them. They evolve, mutate, and constantly change, trying to keep up with us. I use the cast paper to show this transmutation part of the process. The paper pieces play the role of the factory or human element that is causing the change.

I constructed an environment for my glass and paper work to be interpreted in and interact with. There are storage tanks (possibly holding the supply of these glass forms) and an assembly line with conveyor belts piecing together parts. The assembly line tries to make the same thing but is only able to make a close facsimile of the original. This installation is meant to give a sense of movement in the way of mass-production, a larger denotation of movement, much like the subway and meatpacking line.

In the show setting, there is also the sense that there is something happening on the other side of the wall, ceiling or floor. The conveyor belts emerge from the wall, and although the other side can't be seen, you know that these pieces came from that other side. The overhead extruders depositing three glass forms on the floor suggest that they came from a room above.

Suspended pieces and wall forms ooze out from the wall. I am trying to get you to think about what is happening in this other space and invite the viewers to imagine what is happening behind the scenes in this other world.



Fig. 6. Rubber Cap

I also explored the implied use of a tool. These tools appear to have a specific use and maybe even a familiarity, but really are left open to interpretation. They can be seen as a tool that would be used in the factory, but also recall some kind of weapon or even sex toy. I really embrace this ambiguity and welcome the many different interpretations that can be read from them. Utility, pain and pleasure - three descriptors that have a very fine, if not overlapping, line. Depending on the type of person, you will often get a very different analysis of the work. I am attempting to raise awareness of this delicate balance between pain and pleasure, good and bad intentions. I highlight the fact that sometimes point of view is the only difference between one object or idea. There is no right or wrong answer. Only unwillingness to accept a difference of opinion or lack thereof can be the wrong answer.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

My ultimate goal is to create an environment the viewer can step into and discover an entirely unique experience. The entire design of the show was meant to create elements that evoke the familiar yet encourage new audience interpretations. The environment is reminiscent of a factory setting, drawing from my early childhood impressions of the boiler rooms. Because the viewer may not have the same reference to electrical rooms, the work feels both recognizable and novel or unreal, in the Surrealist tradition.

The same can be said about the glass objects themselves. My glass works from earlier semesters were individual objects that appeared to have been made for a specific purpose. My current glass works have a more material-based feel. They represent the material used to make a product, when prior to my processes, they were the product itself.

In addition to the exploration of product and material, my work is still an investigation of systems and movement. I am intrigued by the intricate systems that balance to keep life going, as well as mechanical and industrial systems. The majority of my work is about different types of movement, whether that be an examination of dynamism or an exploration of how the material itself moves.

Lastly, my thesis has been an investigation of why these particular themes of systems and movement interest me. This has been a search to find out the origins of this influence. The first semesters here were more about the objects themselves and the latter part of my tenure became more about the process of discovering where they began. My childhood experiences clearly influence my work. A book about an alien factory planet sparked my imagination as a

two-year-old, and my curiosity about the inner workings of buildings kept me entertained when I accompanied my father to work. Today those interests linger and can be witnessed in my thesis work.

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