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# JASON DODGE

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Jason Dodge has been making exhibitions in galleries, museums, biennials, art centers, and artist run spaces since the late 1990's.

Dodge is the founder of the poetry imprint fivehundred places, which has published over 30 books of poetry by living poets, including Alice Notley, Ishion Hutchinson, Donika Kelly, Eileen Myles, Ilya Kaminsky, and CAConrad.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Tomorrow I walked to a dark black star*. MUDAM, Luxembourg, LU; Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, AT; *Cut Door in the Wolf*, MACRO, Rome, IT; *They lifted me into the sun and packed my empty skull in cinnamon*, a six-part exhibition held at Akwa Ibom, Athens, GR; Guimaraes, Vienna, AT; MOREpublishers with Gevaert Editions, Brussels, BE; Franco Noero's Fetta di Polenta space, Turin, IT; and Gern en Regalia, New York, USA; at the height of the pandemic each exhibition was installed by different artists including Eva Barto, SoIL Thornton, and Giorgio Griffa.

Other exhibitions include: Jason Dodge with Ishion Hutchinson: *The Broad Church of Night*, the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, curated by Deiter Roelstraete, Chicago, USA; *Water Paper Cut*, Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, DE; *Behind this machine anyone with a mind who cares can enter* IAC Vuillerbanne, FR. Dodge co-curated *Enemy of the Stars* with Krist Gruijthuisen at KW Institute, Berlin, DE and has participated in biennials in Venice, IT; Lyon, FR; Liverpool, UK; Porto Alegre, BR; and the Baltic Triennial.

Dodge's work is held in many public collections including: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA; The National Gallery of Art, Washington, USA; D.C. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA; LACMA, Los Angeles, USA; Astrup Fearnley Museum, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, SE; MUDAM, Luxembourg, LU; Castello de Rivoli, Turin, IT; The Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, DE; and IAC Villeurbanne, FR.

## JASON DODGE

Jason Dodge expose dans des galeries, des musées, des biennales, des centres d'art et des espaces gérés par des artistes depuis la fin des années 1990.

Dodge est le fondateur de la maison d'édition de poésie *fivehundred places*, qui a publié plus de trente livres de poésie de poètes contemporains tels que Alice Notley, Ishion Hutchinson, Donika Kelly, Eileen Myles, Ilya Kaminsky et CAConrad.

Ses récentes expositions personnelles comprennent *Tomorrow I walked to a dark black star*, MUDAM, Luxembourg, LU ; Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, AT ; *Cut Door in the Wolf*, MACRO, Rome, IT ; *They lifted me into the sun and packed my empty skull in cinnamon*, une exposition en six parties tenue à Akwa Ibom, Athènes, GR ; Guimaraes, Vienne, AT ; MOREpublishers with Gevaert Editions, Brussels, BE ; Franco Noero's Fetta di Polenta space, Turin, IT ; et Gern en Regalia, New York, USA ; au point culminant de la pandémie, chaque exposition a été installée par différents artistes, dont Eva Barto, Soil Thornton, et Giorgio Griffa.

Les autres expositions comprennent : *Jason Dodge et Ishion Hutchinson : The Broad Church of Night*, Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, sous la direction de Deiter Roelstraete, Chicago, États-Unis ; *Water Paper Cut*, Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, DE ; *Behind this machine, anyone with a mind who cares can enter*, IAC Vuillerbanne, FR. Dodge a coorganisé *Enemy of the Stars* avec Krist Gruijthuisen à l'Institut KW de Berlin (Allemagne) et a participé aux biennales de Venise (Italie), de Lyon (France), de Liverpool (Royaume-Uni), de Porto Alegre (Brésil) et à la Triennale de la Baltique.

Les œuvres de Dodge sont conservées dans de nombreuses collections publiques, notamment au Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA ; The National Gallery of Art, Washington, USA ; D.C. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA ; LACMA, Los Angeles, USA ; Astrup Fearnley Museum, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, SE ; MUDAM, Luxembourg, LU ; Castello de Rivoli, Turin, IT ; The Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, DE ; et IAC Villeurbanne, FR.

## JASON DODGE

Born in 1969 in Newton, PA, US.  
Lives and works on Møn, DK.

### EDUCATION

- 1996 MFA, Yale University School of Art, New Haven, CT, US
- 1992 BFA, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, US
- 1991 Independent Study, Studio Art Centers International, Florence IT
- 1990 Independent Study, in association with Maryland Institute, MW

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 *Jason Dodge*, Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg, Fribourg, CH  
*Jason Dodge, Constellations*, Consonni Radziszewski / Franco Noero, Warsaw, PL
- 2025 *Rose light to white light to rose light over and over by hand*, Galerie Allen, Paris, FR
- 2024 *A Model: Epilogue—Jason Dodge*, MUDAM, The Contemporary Museum of Art, LU  
(*exhibition*), Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, AT
- 2023 *Jason Dodge feat. Florence Jung*, Galerie Allen, Paris, FR  
*Coins and Coffins Under My Bed*, Franco Noero, Milan, IT
- 2022 *Odor Immaterial Sculptures*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen, Siegen, DE
- 2021 *Cut a Door in the Wolf*, Museum of Contemporary Art (MACRO), Rome, IT
- 2020 *They lifted me into the sun and packed my skull with cinnamon*, Guimarães, Vienna, AU  
*They lifted me into the sun and packed my skull with cinnamon*, Akwa Ibom, Athens, GR  
*They lifted me into the sun and packed my skull with cinnamon*, Gern en Regalia, New York, US  
*They lifted me into the sun and packed my skull with cinnamon*, Gilles Drouault galerie/multiples, Paris, FR  
*They lifted me into the sun and packed my skull with cinnamon*, MOREpublishers with Gevaert Editions, Brussels, BE  
*They lifted me into the sun and packed my skull with cinnamon*, Galleria Franco Noero, Torino, IT  
*A work for no public audience*, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Torino, IT
- 2019 *As Soon As The Invented Language Enters Us Something Else Will Vibrate In Our Skin*, Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples, IT
- 2018 *The Broad Church of Night*, Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, Chicago, IL, US  
*Hand in hand with the handless*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
*Jason Dodge*, Galleria Franco Noero, Torino, IT
- 2017 *Liberty*, Kunsthalle Bremerhaven, Bremerhaven, DE  
*Jason Dodge/Paul Thek*, Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, DE
- 2016 *Behind this machine anyone with a mind who cares can enter*, Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne, FR  
*Jason Dodge with CAConrad Width of a Witch*, Mercer Union and Kunstverein Toronto, Toronto, CN
- 2015 *Shoes that have been made for someone with three legs*, Centre d'édition Contemporaine, Geneva, CH
- 2014 *These, ours.*, Galleria Franco Noero, Torino, IT  
*We are the meeting*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US
- 2013 *What we have done*, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA, US  
*Jason Dodge*, LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz, Linz, AU  
*Jason Dodge | Martino Gamper*, American Academy in Rome (with Martino Gamper), Rome, IT
- 2012 *Jason Dodge*, Kunstverein Nürnberg, Nürnberg, DE  
*Jason Dodge*, Galleria Franco Noero, Torino, IT
- 2011 *Jason Dodge*, Andersens Contemporary, Copenhagen, DK  
*Jason Dodge*, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, LT
- 2010 *Jason Dodge*, Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin, DE  
*Jason Dodge*, Veneklasen/Werner, Berlin, DE  
*Jason Dodge*, Yvon Lambert, Paris, FR  
*I woke up. There was a note in my pocket explaining what had happened*, La Galerie, Noisy-le-Sec, FR  
*I woke up. There was a note in my pocket explaining what had happened*, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover, DE
- 2009 *And for this I will call you the listener*, Project Space, Kunstverein Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, DE  
*When I woke up. There was a note in my pocket explaining what had happened*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
*Jason Dodge*, Yvon Lambert, Paris, FR
- 2008 *Jason Dodge*, Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin, DE  
*Jason Dodge*, Massimo De Carlo, Milan, IT

- Rituals: Jason Dodge / Tereza Buskova*, One One One (The David Roberts Art Foundation), London, UK  
 2007 *Jason Dodge*, Yvon Lambert, Paris, FR  
 2006 *Jason Dodge*, REC., Berlin, DE  
*Jason Dodge*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
 2005 *Installation Series*, Villa Arson, Nice, FR  
 2004 *Installation Series*, Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA, US  
 2003 *Mercury Vapor Lamp & a Month of Sundays*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
 2002 *Milton Keynes New City*, Galleria Massimo De Carlo, Milan, IT  
*Milton Keynes New City*, c/o Atle Gerhardsen, Berlin, DE  
 2001 *Biatblon*, Casey Kaplan 10-6, New York, NY, US  
 2000 *Jason Dodge*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
*Jason Dodge*, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, JP  
 1999 *Anders Contrave: Part 1, Art Statements*, Art/30/Basel, Messe Basel, Basel, CH  
*Anders Contrave: Part 2, Your Description of an Impossible Scenario of How We Could Be Together is What Made Me Love You and Broke Both our Hearts*, Moderna Museet Projekt, Stockholm, SE  
 1998 *Helsinki*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 *Jason Dodge with Yvo Cbo, Keta Gavasheli, Megan Plunkett, Merry Alpern, Felice Tosalli*, cur. Luca Lo Pinto, Barbati Gallery, Venezia, IT  
*Le Syndrome de Bonnard*, Frac Île-de-France, Réserves, Romainville, FR  
 2025 *What are you thiking*, Portikus, Frankfurt am Main, DE  
*Works on Paper*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY  
 2024 2019, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, AT  
*Three Tired Tigers*, Jameel Art Centre, Dubai, UAE  
*AMONG THE INVISIBLE JOINS Opere dalla Collezione Enea Righi*, Museion, Bolzano, IT  
*Same Day*, 15th Baltic Triennial, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, LT  
*Condo Mexico City*, Mexico City, MX  
*Water Papercut*, BASE Firenze & BASE temporary situations – Torino, IT  
 2023 *APA/RT*, Torino, IT  
*Full of Days*, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK  
*Everybody Talks About the Weather*, curated by Dieter Roelstraete, Fondazione Prada, Venice, IT  
*Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA3)*, curated by Rene Block, Riga, LV  
*Blank. Raw. Illegible... Artists' Books as Statements (1960-2022)*, Leopold-Hoesch-Museum, Düren, DE  
*Oltre il buio*, Rocca di Angera - Ala Scaligera, Terre Borromeo, Angera, IT  
*SHIFT: Ecologies of Fashion, Form and Textile*, Griffin Art Projects, North Vancouver, CA  
 2022 *Odor, Immaterial Sculptures*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen, Siegen, DE  
*Fata Morgana*, curated by Beatrice Gross and Katinka Bock, Jeu De Paume, Paris, FR  
*Es-senze*, Museo di Palazzo Mocenigo, Venice, IT  
 2021 *In Search of the Miraculous*, FLAG Art Foundation, New York, US  
*Apophenia*, Las Palmas, Culturgest Porto, PT  
 2020 *My Body Holds Its Shape*, Tai Kwun, Hong Kong, HK  
*local talent*, Sprüth Magers, Berlin, DE  
 2019 *Just Connect*, MCA Chicago, IL, US  
*Time Is Thirsty*, Kunsthalle Wien, AT  
*Second Hand*, Art Jameel Centre, Dubai, UAE  
*Auguries Cast Aside*, Karma, New York, US  
*Chinese Whispers #5*, Meessen De Clercq, Brussels, BE  
*Josephine Meckseper*, Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, FR  
*Phenomenon 3*, Anafi, GR  
*Political Affairs - Language is Not Innocent*, Kunstverein in Hamburg, Hamburg, DE  
 2018 *Double Take*, Last Tango, Zurich, CH  
*She sees the shadows*, MOSTYN, Mostyn, Wales, UK  
*Painting the Night*, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, FR  
*Triennial Beaufort*, Belgium, BE  
*Stories of Almost Everyone*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, US  
*Rehearsal*, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong, HK  
 Centre D'Édition Contemporaine, Geneva, CH  
 2018 *Stories of Almost Everyone*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, US

- Rehearsal*, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong, HK  
Centre D'Édition Contemporaine, Geneva, CH
- 2017 *An Inventory of Shimmers: Objects of Intimacy in Contemporary Art*, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA, US  
*The Transported Man*, The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Lansing, US  
*More Than Just Words [On the Poetic]*, Kunsthalle Wien Museumsquartier, Vienna, AU  
*No Place Like Home*, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, IL
- 2016 *Group show - Andrea Büttner, Alejandro Cesarco, Jason Dodge, Van Hanos, Tanya Leighton*, Berlin, DE  
*Resonating Surfaces*, Mendes Wood, Sao Paulo, BR  
*9th Liverpool Biennial*, Liverpool, UK  
*Can I Step on It?*, Galleria Franco Noero, Torino, IT  
*No One and One Hundred Thousand*, Kunsthalle Wien, Wien, AU  
*Fluidity*, Kunstverein in Hamburg, Hamburg, DE  
*Prototypology: An Index of Process and Mutation*, Gagolian Gallery, Rome, IT
- 2015 *Collection'15*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Villeurbanne/ Rhône-Alpes, FR  
*Artists' Voices*, Centre d'édition Contemporaine, Geneva, CH  
WOOSH, Griffin Art Projects, Vancouver, CN  
*A Space is a Space is a Space*, DAZ, Berlin, DE  
*The doorstep*, Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, IN  
*Out of Office*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL, US  
*The Blue Distance*, curated by Courtenay Finn, Art Museum, Aspen, CO, US  
*You're in the Right Place*, curated by the AIRBNB Pavilion, Fondazione Sandretto Rebaudengo, Torino, IT  
*Conversation sur l'Invisible*, Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Paris, FR
- 2014 *@ the shrink*, Shanaynay, Paris, FR  
*Never Look Back When Leaving*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
*The Peacock*, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, AU  
*The Crime Was Almost Perfect*, curated by Cristina Ricupero, Witte de With, Rotterdam, NL
- 2013 *55th Venice Biennale*, Lithuanian Pavillion, curated by Raimundas Malasauskas, IT  
1966-79, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, Villeurbanne, FR  
*12th Biennale de Lyon*, curated by Gunnar B. Kvaran, Lyon, FR  
*A House of Leaves* curated by Vincent Honoré, *Third Movement*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London, UK  
*Specific Collisions*, curated by Melissa Gordon, Marianne Boesky, New York, NY, US  
*A Stone Left Unturned*, curated by Simon Castets, Yvon Lambert, New York, NY, US  
*Now Here is Also Nowhere II*, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA, US  
*L'Image papillon*, MUDAM, Luxembourg City, LU  
*Group exhibition*, curated by Luca Cerizza, Vistamare, Pescara  
"Struktur & Organismus", Mühlendorf, AU  
*Sin motivo aparente*, Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid, ES  
*Night (1947-2015)*, curated by Jordan Stein, Philip Johnson's Glass House, New Canaan, CT, US  
*The 9th Mercosul Biennial*, Porto Alegre, BR
- 2012 *No. 17*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
*Economy of Means: Toward Humility in Contemporary Sculpture*, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ, US  
*La triennale- Intense Proximity*, curated by Okwui Enwezor, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR  
*Modern Monsters/Death and Life of Fiction*, Taipei Biennial curated by Anselm Franke, Taipei, TW  
*Metaphoria*, Guimaraes, PT  
*Dimensions Variables*, Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne, FR  
*A House of Leaves. Second Movement*, curated by Vincent Honoré, David Roberts Art Foundation, London, UK
- 2011 *In the Name of the Artists - American Contemporary Art from the Astrup Fearnley Collection*, in cooperation with the Sao Paulo Biennale, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, São Paulo, BR  
*Arte Essenziale*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main, DE  
*Adrift*, Memphis College of Art, Memphis, TN, US  
*The Bell Show*, Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin, DE  
*The Workers*, Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA, US  
*Light in Darkness*, Western Bridge, Seattle, WA, US  
*Language of less (then & now)*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL, US  
*Essential Art*, Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, IT  
*Barely There*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Detroit, MI, US  
*Blessedness*, COCO Kunstverein, Vienna, AU  
*MOMENTUM 2011*, 6th Nordic Biennial for Nordic Contemporary Art, Moss, NO  
*More or Less: A Few Pocket Universes*, Gallery Augusta, Helsinki, FI

- 2010 *En Cada Instante*, Ruptura, curated by Carla Herrera-Prats and Susan Cross, Sala de Arte Publico Siqueiros, Mexico City, MX. Travelling to: Mass MoCA, The Workers: Contemporary Representations of Labor, North Adams, MA, US  
*21st Century Outlook*, Frac Ile-de-France/Le Plateau, Paris, FR  
*En Cada Instante, Ruptura*, curated by Carla Herrera-Prats, Sala de Arte Publico Siqueiros, Mexico City, MX  
*L'Exposition Lunatique*, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, FR  
*Objects are like they appear*, Meessen de Clercq, Brussels, BE  
*Exhibition, Exhibition*, curated by Adam Carr, Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art Piazza, Turin, IT  
*Reflection: 15 Years*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
*The Berlin Box*, curated by Friederike Nymphius, CCA Andratx, Mallorca, ES  
*Freeze*, Nils Staerk Gallery, Copenhagen, DK  
*Woodman Woodman Spare That Tree*, Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin, DE
- 2009 *Into Black... et pas blanc comme neige*, Dazibao Centre de Photographies Actuelles, Montreal, CN  
*Cargo Manifest*, Kunsthalle Autocenter, Berlin, DE  
*Scorpios Garden*, Temporäre Kunsthalle, Berlin, DE  
*Plus Général En Particular*, Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, FR  
*Spatial Works*, curated by Theodor Ringborg, Färgfabriken, Stockholm, SE  
*Cargo Manifest*, Bavarian State Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich, DE  
*The Quick and the Dead*, curated by Peter Eleey, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, US  
*Gallery III*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US
- 2008 *The Awakening of the Birds: Homage to Olivier Messiaen*, Collection Lambert, Avignon, FR  
*Tell me everything you saw and what you think it means: Jason Dodge / Lisa Oppenheim / Elisabeth Magdalena Reitmeier*, Galerie Iris Kadel, Karlsruhe, DE  
*I Vedenti*, curated by Luca Cerizza, Uovo Open Space, Basel, CH  
*Neutre Intense*, MITIM La Maison Populaire Centre D'Art, Montreuil  
*Le Cabinet des Merveilles, Eternuements de Corneilles, Pieds d'Huîtres et Oeufs de Léopard*, la Galerie du Conseil Général in Aix-en-Provence, FR  
*Arts Le Havre: Biennale of Contemporary Art*, Le Havre, FR  
*The Store*, curated by Adam Carr, Tulips & Roses, Vilnius, LT  
*Visions/Nocturnes*, La Galerie, Noisy-le-Sec, FR  
*Ultramoderne*, CAC Passerelle, Brest, FR
- 2007 *From a distance*, curated by Vincent Honoré, Wallspace, New York, NY, US  
*This Winter*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
*You Always Move in Reverse*, curated by Bjarne Melgaard, Leo Koenig Inc., New York, NY, US  
*Ultramoderne*, Luxembourg et Grande région capitale européenne de la culture 2007, Luxemburg City, LU  
*Vincent Honoré Curates*, Wallspace, New York, NY, US  
*SOME TIME WAITING*, curated by Adam Carr, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, FR
- 2006 *Into Black*, Western Bridge, Seattle, WA, US  
*When the Moon Shines on the Moonshine*, curated by Robert Meijer, The Breeder, Athens, GR  
*Street: Behind the Cliché*, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, NL  
*Message Personnel*, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, FR  
*Ars viva 05/06 - Identity*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE
- 2005 *Ars viva 05/06 - Identity*, Kunsthalle Rostock, Rostock, DE traveling to Extra City - Museum for Contemporary Art, Antwerp, DE; Kunst-Werke Berlin e.V. Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE  
*24th Incidental*, part of Performa Biennial 2005, Swiss Institute of Contemporary Art, New York, NY, US  
*Parallel Life*, Frankfurt Kunstverein, Frankfurt, DE  
*Goodbye Fourteenth Street*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
*Therefore Beautiful*, Ursula Blicke Stiftung, Kraichtal- Unteröwisheim, DE
- 2004 *None of the Above*, Swiss Institute-Contemporary Art, New York, NY, US  
*The Stars Are So Big, The Earth Is So Small...Stay As You Are (Part II)*, Esther Schipper, Berlin, DE; traveling to Studio Manuela Klerkx, Milan, IT  
*Formalism. Modern Art Today*, Hamburg Kunstverein, Hamburg, DE  
*Repeat Performance*, Artists Space, New York, NY and Villa Arson, Nice, FR
- 2003 *160 Meisterzeichnungen*, Oldenburger Kunstverein, Oldenburg, DE  
*Nation*, Franfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, DE  
*Adorno*, Franfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, DE  
*Unbuilt Cities*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, DE
- 2002 *The Fall*, curated by Jesper N. Jørgensen, Galleri Christina Wilson, Copenhagen, DK  
*Lap Dissolve, Nathan Carter, Jason Dodge, Ceal Floyer, Liam Gillick, Carsten Höller & Simon Starling*, Casey

- Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
Gallery Luhman, Nils Staerk Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, DK  
2001 *The Wedding Show*, Casey Kaplan 10-6, New York, NY, US  
*Casino*, S.M.A.K., Gent, BE  
2000 *The Rules of Croquet, The Rules of a Fluttering Heart, part of Halcyon Days*, organized by the Public Art Fund,  
MetroTech Center, Brooklyn, NY, US  
*10 - 6*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY, US  
*What if?*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, SE  
*Game On!*, Sara Meltzer Gallery, New York, NY, US  
*Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial 2000*, Niigata, JP  
*Luggage*, Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, DE  
*All You Can Eat*, Galerie Fur Zeitgenossische Kunst, Leipzig, DE  
1997 *Clean and Sane*, curated by Maria Lind, Edsvik Konst Kultur, Sollentuna, SE, traveled to Galleri F15, Moss, NO  
1995 *Familiar places/Currents '95*, ICA, Boston, MA, US  
*Verisimilitude*, curated by Gregory Crewdson, White Columns, New York, NY, US

#### AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2005/2006 Ars Viva, DE  
2004 Residency at Villa Arson, Nice, FR  
1999 IASPIS, International Artists' Studio Program in Sweden, Stockholm, SE  
1996 Fannie B. Pardee Prize, Yale University, New Haven, CT, US  
1995 Schickle Collingwood Prize, Yale University, New Haven, CT, US

#### PROJECTS

- 2015 *Tomorrow night I Walked to a dark black star*, Curated by Raimundas Malašauskas and Jason Dodge,  
Universidad Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires, AR  
2014 *Ronald Jones: 1987-1992*, Curated by Jason Dodge and Krist Gruijthuijsen, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, AU  
2013-ongoing *A permanently open window*, Maramotti Collection, Reggio Emilia, IT

#### COLLECTIONS

Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, NO  
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., US  
Kunsthalle Bielefeld, DE  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, US  
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, SE  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, US  
The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., US  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, US  
Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, FR  
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, Villeurbanne, FR  
Israel Museum, Jerusalem, IL  
Montreal Museum of Fine Art, CN  
Castello de Rivoli, Rivoli, IT  
Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin DE

#### PUBLICATIONS

- 2019 Dorothea Lasky, Jason Dodge, 'AS SOON AS THE INVENTED LANGUAGE ENTERS US SOMETHING  
ELSE WILL VIBRATE IN OUR SKIN'. Seattle: Waves Books, 2019.  
2017 'Water Paper Cut'. Berlin: Schinkel Pavillon, 2017.

- 2016 Dodge, Jason and CAConrad, Ready to Get Bleeding, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, Villeurbanne, 2016  
Dodge, Jason and CAConrad, Width of a Witch, TYPE Books: Toronto, 2016
- 2014 A permanently open window, edited by Johanna Bishop, Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Mousse Publishing, 2014
- 2013 Jason Dodge: What we have done/What have we done, exh. cat. Forward by Sylvia Wolf and Luis Croquer, Seattle: the Henry Art Gallery, 2013  
Jason Dodge: a hole through speaking, exh. cat., Forward by Roelstraete, Dieter, Linz: Lentos Kunstmuseum & Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2013
- 2011 In the Name of the Artists: American Contemporary Art from the Astrup Fearnley Collection exh. cat., Sao Paulo Bienal, p.144-145  
Drawing Room Confessions: Jason Dodge, Issue #2, London: Drawing Room Confessions, 2011  
language of less (then & now), edited by Michael Darling and David Raskin, Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2011, p. 30-32, 55-57  
Federico Ferrari, Arte Essenziale, exh. cat. Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 2011, p.81-94  
Barely There, Part I, exh. cat., Detroit: Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 2011
- 2010 Exhibition, Exhibition, edited by Adam Carr, Castello di Rivoli, Milan, Skira: 2010  
The Art of Tomorrow. Edited by Laura Hoptman, Yilmaz Dziewior, Uta Grosenick, Distanz, Verlag, Germany, 2010, p.114-117  
Jason Dodge: I woke up. There was a note in my pocket explaining what had happened. Edited by Friederike Schönhuth, Hatje Cantz, Germany, 2010
- 2009 Scorpio's Garden, compiled by Kirstine Roepstorff, Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Köln, 2009  
The Quick and the Dead, curated by Peter Eleey, Walker Art Center, D.P.A Publishers, Minneapolis, 2009
- 2008 Dodge, Jason. Homing Pigeons. Paris: Onestar Press, 2008
- 2007 Jason Dodge, Editions Yvon Lambert, Paris, 2007
- 2005 Ars Viva 05/06: Identity: Jason Dodge, Takehito Koganezawa, Michaela Meise, Robin Rhode, Frankfurt: Revolver, 2005  
Hoffman, Irene and Laurence Gateau (eds.), Jason Dodge. Newport Beach, CA and Nice, France: Orange County Museum of Art & Villa Arson, 2005
- 2004 Dziewior, Yilmaz, et. al, Formalism. Modern Art, Today. Germany: Kunstverein Hamburg & Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004
- 2003 Graw, Isabelle and Georg Schöllhammer, Adorno: The Possibility of the Impossible, Frankfurt: Franfurter Kunstverein, 2003  
Pohlen, Annelie, Unbuilt Cities, Bonn: Bonner Kunstverein, 2003-2004
- 2001 AUTUMN WINTER SPRING SUMMER AUTUMN, Krabbesholm, Denmark, 2001
- 2001 Spector, Nancy (catalogue text), Moderna Museet Projekt: Jason Dodge, Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 2001
- 2000 Game On!, Sara Meltzer Gallery, New York, 2000, 5  
All You Can Eat, Galerie Fur Zeitgenbssische Kunst, Leipzig: Galerie Fur Zeitgenbssische Kunst, 2000
- 1997 Fresh Cream, London: Phaidon, 1997
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JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *Le Syndrome de Bonnard ou l'impermanence des œuvres*,  
2026

Frac Île-de-France, Les Réserves, Romainville, FR

Photo : Aurélien Mole



JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *What are you thiking*, 2026  
Portikus, Frankfurt am Main, DE  
Photo: Wolfgang Günze



JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *What are you thiking*, 2026  
Portikus, Frankfurt am Main, DE  
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JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *Jason Dodge*  
Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, Austria, 2024  
Photo: kunst-dokumentation.com



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JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *Jason Dodge. Tomorrow, I walked to a dark black star*  
MUDAM, Luxembourg, 2024  
Courtesy of the artist and MUDAM, Luxembourg  
Photo: Aurélien Mole | Mudam Luxembourg



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JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *CUT A DOOR IN THE WOLF*  
Museo MACRO, Rome, Italy, 2021-2022  
Photo: Piercarlo Quecchia, DSL Studio



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JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *Jason Dodge, Paul Thek*  
Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, Germany, 2017  
Courtesy of the artist and Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin



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Exhibition view, *Jason Dodge, Paul Thek*  
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JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *Jason Dodge. Behind this machine anyone with a mind who cares can enter*  
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, France, 2016  
Courtesy of the artist and Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes  
Photo: IAC, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes



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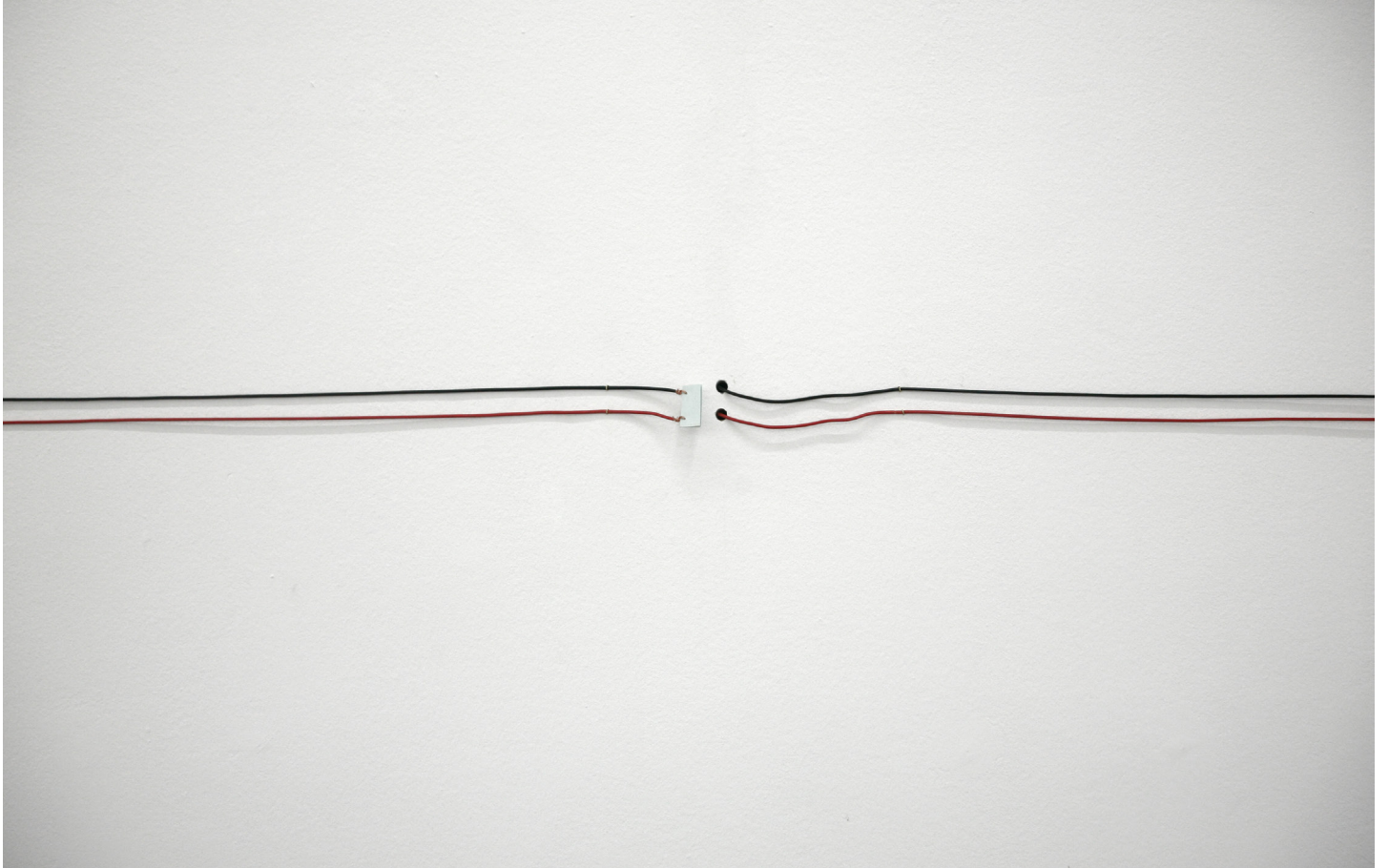
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Photo: IAC, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes



JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *Collection '15*,  
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, France, 2015  
Courtesy of the artist and Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes  
Photo: Blaise Adilon



JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, *Collection '15*,  
Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, France, 2015  
Courtesy of the artist and Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes  
Photo: Blaise Adilon



JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, 1976-79

Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, 2013

Courtesy of the artist and Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes

Photo: Blaise Adilon



JASON DODGE

Exhibition view, 1976-79

Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, 2013

Courtesy of the artist and Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes

Photo: Blaise Adilon

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PRESS

# Mood over Content

**After art's artistic turn, mood is the new benchmark for quality in contemporary art, positing a philosophically sustainable alternative to spectacle and newness.**

**By Kristian Vistrup Madsen 18.10.24 Essay Artikel på dansk**



Exhibition view, *It is light*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, 2024; Ada Frände, *Haltestelle II* and Julia Heyward, *Conscious Knocks Unconscious*. Photo: Mareike Tocha.

Since the beginning of the decade, much art has become artistic again. Meaning, it has ceased to be about itself or some designated topic. Art has shed the self-consciousness of the avant-garde tradition, instead veering towards traditional media, towards expression. What happened to Sturtevant, the Pictures Generation, Institutional Critique, exasperated professors will ask of their millennial – and younger – students, who, in their turn, are investing in a historical continuity beyond modernism, in sincerity, even spirituality.

Spirituality, I think, is the point on which the current generational divide turns. For millennials, the state is no longer a viable religion, as it was for our parents – neither is socialism, formalism, or deconstruction – and within a decade identity politics, too, has been exhausted, yielding only the dogmatism of religion without any of its existential depth. As I wrote last year in an [essay](#) for Kunstkritikk,

criticality is, by now, its own form of capitalist kitsch, and this to the point that even turns towards embodiment or affect have felt like intellectual contrivances rather than art. Criticality is a press release, a funding application; it is less likely to make a work of art more complex than more legible, digestible, and sellable.

While, in my previous treatise, I partly lamented this new art's departure from more overtly intellectual traditions – as well as its seeming lack of criteria – I also suggested that it might present critics with a chance to stake more definite claims. My intention here is to be less on the fence. Quality, now that I've thought about it, is in fact even less of a mystery when it comes to artistic art than that of the schools of information or attitude, where discourse and networks often act as smoke-screens. Given its less intellectually convoluted relation to its own medium – indeed, to the notion of art-making altogether – artistic art offers a moment of ontological simplicity in which to consider what we want and need from art, and how our lives with and within it can become meaningful and sustainable. And here I do not mean ecologically but existentially; I mean recovering a way of relating to our experiences and creativity that is not extractivist.

The answer to these questions may be summed up in what I will call mood. Mood is art's excess – in the best of cases a kind of helpless secretion – and this is the basic measure of the quality of a work of artistic art. Mood situates you, undoes you for a moment, and even reflects its glow onto works from avant-garde traditions, emphasising their emotional score and showing us what we have forgotten. That is to say, what made them art in the first place.

The artists that I will mention as examples – Jason Dodge, Tolia Astakhishvili, TARWUK, Vera Palme, and James Richards – are not all millennials, and as such are also not obvious exponents of the more recent turn towards the artistic. Rather, I believe their works are exemplary of what a more sensual, immediate, and *alive* kind of art can be. An art that posits an, on a human level, richer alternative to spectacle and newness. But mood is also a way of seeing, a certain sensitivity in the way of treating objects and spaces. It is in the uncompromising precision of Susanne Pfeffer's curation at Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK), Frankfurt; in

the inherently spiritual modus of Cologne's museum of catholic art, Kolumba; and in the special signature evident in Fatima Hellberg's programme at the Bonner Kunstverein.

I take my title from the Viennese art historian Alois Riegl's 1899 paper *Die Stimmung als Inhalt der Modernen Kunst*, the English translation of which settles on the admittedly much flatter "mood as content." It is important, then, to loop in the German *Stimmung*, which evokes voice, tune, and attunement, as well as atmosphere and resonance. As instruments are tuned in concert, *Stimmung* is relational. As a philosophical concept, it can be traced back to early nineteenth-century Romantic thought, which began to dismantle a clear distinction between object and subject, understanding mood both as the property of objects – say, a landscape – as well as the receptivity of a subject – their "being in tune" with that landscape, a state not of mindless passive immersion, but of heightened awareness.

Sticking to Riegl's phrase also requires us to make a distinction between situations where mood is content – that is, a constitutive factor, at once practice and outcome – and where it is employed merely as method, what I qualified above as a form of styling. Mood is not the umber-coloured interior design art that circulates on Instagram. In considering the English word 'content' as it is used precisely in relation to social mediae, we might even say that in this case mood *overrides* content. Mood is not information, and has nothing to teach; it is a battle between mind and body, which neither has won. It is not aura, which, as Benjamin argued, is parasitical, an effect of fetishisation, but energy self-sufficient.

What we register as mood is the totality of an object's presence – a presence that necessarily also makes demands of our own. It is not that the artwork cannot tell us of anything outside itself, but that the friction it produces between object and subject manifests as its core property. This means that where mood is content there can be no "about" – what has turned so much critical art into a farce. It also means that any language present does not serve as context or meta-text, but is folded into a whole in the face of which language has long fallen short. Where there is no "about" there can also be no explanation; mood, then, is a question to writers, too, as to what a more meaningful way of relating art to language might be.



Exhibition view, Jason Dodge, Grazer Kunstverein, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Galleria Franco Noero, Torino. Photo: kunst-dokumentation.com.

Exhibition view, Jason Dodge, Grazer Kunstverein, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Galleria Franco Noero, Torino. Photo: kunst-dokumentation.com.

In June, the Grazer Kunstverein – moodily directed by Tom Engels – opened an untitled exhibition by Jason Dodge, the US-born artist and, importantly, sometimes poet. Untitled, or rather, as the exhibition text read: “the title of his exhibition is the collection of images that accompanies it. Three images of a red eye, split, side by side.” Dodge covered the floor in wet sheets of plastic, and mindfully, almost nervously arranged objects – branches, building materials, trash, and lights – hovering on the edge of their own presence. Like cautiously treading through a haiku, or the parallel world of Andrei Tarkovsky’s film *Stalker* (1979), logic and causality, in Dodge, appear suspended in favour of a complex interplay between perception, subjectivity, and language.

Though immersive in this way, the art of mood is a far cry from the outsized science experiments of the great studio artists of the 2000s (Olafur Eliasson, Tomas Saraceno, Alicja Kwade, Carsten Höller). And likewise from the current tendency within institutions to cover a space in expensive exhibition design – shocking amounts of colourful wall-to-wall carpets and theatre light – that has the unfortunate side effect of reducing the artworks to props. Commissioned on

the occasion of (and with funding related to) the European football championship, Marianna Simnett's elaborate multi-media installation, on view this summer at Hamburger Bahnhof, is one case in point. Where Simnett's early videos convey strong, even if repulsive, affect, when roped into an entertainment-industrial chain of supply and demand, the result was a senseless spectacle of about-ness that primarily testified to an overworked artist and a bloated budget.

Mood cannot be achieved through styling, but sets a higher bar reached only through comprehensive creative, intellectual, and personal engagement. As was evident in Dodge's Graz show, for instance, it is rather a matter of uncovering the potential of what's already there. Mood rolls back art's professionalisation because it demands something that it would require structural changes in order to buy: presence, sensitivity, and time.

For this reason, the artist of mood most likely needs another source of income, just as the curator cannot meaningfully churn out six shows a year. Mood, then, is for the most part too demanding to be commercially or institutionally viable: at the MMK in Frankfurt, exhibitions have been delayed and catalogues are years in the making, and at Bonner Kunstverein the team brings sleeping bags to the openings so they can help clean up early the next day, a beautiful circumstance that, Hellberg knows, cannot be counted upon, but must develop organically.

With mood as benchmark, one does not make a career as an artist, curator, or writer – one makes a life. For sure, this poses a structural challenge in an art world already too determined by class, but it also puts an end to a certain gaslighting within the industry as to what is actually possible, as well as to soul-destroying misunderstandings about what art is and should do. Instead, mood both asks and answers the existential question of what this is all for.

Installation view, Tolia Astakhishvili,  
*between father and mother*,  
SculptureCenter, New York, 2024. Tolia  
Astakhishvili, *The art of sleeping*, 2024.  
Car engines, pallets, plywood,  
cardboard, found objects, four-channel

suddenly, the ancient quality of things. Through mood, objects do not become reified – as in Pop art, even if self-consciously so – but evasive, as if dissolved.

With mood as prism, quality names the ability of a work to profoundly mystify or unsettle our view onto reality. With regards, for instance to the problematic presence of a painting by Vera Palme, I would use a word like transubstantiation. A Palme painting changes the temperature of a room. Another keyword with which I associate mood is aporia – a profound experience of internal contradiction or doubt. But though mood shares such spiritual vocabulary with religion, it is ontologically impossible for the art of mood to be dogmatic or missionary. Unlike much of the supposedly secular, and in fact highly protestant, theme-art we've endured over the last decades, it does not offer redemption. (It seems to me that, if the denouncement of spirituality in art had the purpose of steering clear of moralising propaganda, the sacrifice has largely been in vain.)



Exhibition view, Vera Palme, *Immer realistischere Malerei*, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, 2024.

Where mood is concerned, what appears as the outcome is but a pause in the flow of practice. The films of James Richards are exemplary in this regard. Over the last fifteen years, the Welsh artist has developed a special form of poetic mix-taping, whereby videos appear as carefully composed extractions from an incessant process of collecting and manipulating footage. To consider the works from this perspective is also to try and distance oneself from the system in which even films such as Richards's, trash

sculptures like Dodge's, or world-building exercises like Astakhishvili's, after all, do eventually circulate as capitalist fetish objects.

For mood is antithetical to fetish; the object quite simply does not exist in any substantial way outside of its immediate context. Here again it opposes Pop art and even Institutional Critique in refuting interest in its own circulation. The fetish aspect is a structural problem. But the value of the work of art is what appears in the moment of its creation and transports through the vehicle of mood to the viewers – not what ends up parked in a free port. Mood, then, does not have politics, but it *is* political because, on an ontological level, it de-centres commodity fetishism and individual authorship.

TARWUK is a duo from Yugoslavia, a country that no longer exists. Their name means nothing, but looks like it might, and the titles of their works are the same. Language, in TARWUK, is a type of hallucination. Their work begins from this place of dissolved belonging, blurred subjectivities. Mood is, in this way, beyond personality and identity; it addresses the nature of subjectivity, the conditions of existence. I wrote about their exhibition at Halle für Kunst Steiermark in Graz last year as a “confrontation with the monstrosity of selfhood breaking out of its confines; selfhood confronted with itself.”

This description is quite literal: humanoid sculptures between degeneration and apotropaic magic. Ritual has no small part in TARWUK's practice, where paintings often come together during collaborative full moon seances; sculptures are assembled from highway debris ceremoniously collected as though offerings from the gods. There is humour here – certainly an element of the carnivalesque – and yet no distance. What we experience with them is not a posture, not the evocation of a *discourse*, say, of the occult or mystical, but something very real and, in its own way, incredibly intense.

**EXHIBITIONS**

By **Vanessa Joan Müller**  
Issue 80 | Summer 2024  
Jason Dodge, Concept Art, Grazer Kunstverein

# Jason Dodge at Grazer Kunstverein



All images courtesy: the artist; Galleria Franco Noero, Turin; Grazer Kunstverein. Photos: kunst-dokumentation.com

In Graz, an installation strewn with organic flotsam and man-made throwaways beckons presence through a poetic leak.

Upon entering Jason Dodge's (\*1969) exhibition at the Grazer Kunstverein, one might mistake it for a non-exhibition. The space appears empty, with only a few remnants on the floor, as if the previous show had just been dis-mantled. A lamp on the wall

by wet floor cloths, covers the ground; the heating is shrouded in transparent sheeting; candy wrappers float in puddles; crumpled, grayish plastic and textiles are scattered everywhere, perhaps laid out to dry.

Dodge's installation is a carefully choreographed chaos, albeit with cause and effect suspended. It is a mixture of workaday objects, organic debris, fake advertising handouts, and raffle tickets designed by the artist, blurring the distinction between things found and made. Everything is arranged in unexpected alliances, provocative evidence of what strange scenarios might have transpired. Some elements are apparent traces of previous activities; others remain obscure. Small pieces of paper scattered on the floor read *livraison de glace* (ice delivery), accompanied by an Austrian telephone number. Twigs and petals have incurred on the art space and turn it into a natural-ish habitat. Feathers float in the water; in one corner, dry leaves lie next to dishwasher tabs, toothbrushes, and a ball of string.



This strange, immersive landscape is neither backdrop nor imitation, but a proposal for a radically different form of encounter with art, its institutions, and our relation to both. Things discovered, collected, or abandoned by others are placed in the gallery, but will return to the world they belong to after deinstallation. Visitors can look at them, but also move around and step on things, touch them, perhaps even rearrange them. The setting changes with the presence of an audience, more so than that of the artist himself. Untitled and undated, Dodge's installation demands our involvement in the present tense, its continuous addition of textures, suggestions, and meanings transcending the expectation of the exhibition as an end-point. What we see might be a leak, the floodwaters receding, or just the start of a deluge.

corridor, a floor grate covers a cloth emitting the strong, invigorating scent of camphor. The Kunstverein's janitor closet has been transformed into a kind of cage. Equipped with a metal portcullis, we can peer into the small, furtive room, now wall-papered with old advertisements for the ambiguous Center for Insect Science, "dedicated to research to develop products that kill insects." Painted in bright red, the images' *Vertigo*-like spirals turn out to be incense coils. Is this space, with its catchy geometric pattern, a trap? The poster signals hostility to the idea of co-living species, but the rest of the gallery is blocked with cleaning equipment, along with a forest of branches and twigs culled by the artist after a recent local storm.



In the Shakespearean sonnet, the *volta* (Italian for "turn") introduces a change of thought, argument, or direction just before the final couplet. It's meant to denature or re-catalyze the preceding text – a new suggestion for reading an earlier stanza, a possibility for transformation. Dodge, who founded and runs the poetry publisher [fivehundred places](#), here brings literal poetics to bear on exhibition-making, by writing through the narrative possibilities materialized in flotsam – whether from the street, the Kunstverein's storage, or a nearby park. Arrangements that look like chance encounters – dried leaves next to a pillbox, lottery tickets strewn on the floor, reflective shimmers of air and water knotted in milky plastic – create assemblages rich in (or entirely empty of) connotation, as much as a visitor's random arrival reshapes its atmosphere entirely. Taken as a whole, the exhibition speaks eloquently about our relations with the private worlds of things, turning on the quantum question of whether or not we're *there*.

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Jason Dodge  
Grazer Kunstverein, Graz  
22 Jun – 24 Aug 2024



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## One cannot speak of anything else but the weather: art and science dialogue on the subject at Fondazione Prada in Venice

by PAOLA NATALIA PEPA • 25 JULY 2023 • REVIEWS

It's all anyone can talk about right now: 'climate change' is the most talked about, clicked about, fought about, feared topic... the one that more than any other is endangering the environment we live in, the world's communities and economies, but above all our survival as human beings. In line with the climate changes we are all aware of, the **Fondazione Prada** presents 'Everybody Talks About the Weather', an exhibition that addresses the issue of the climate emergency by exploring variations and artistic research on weather, at Ca' Corner della Regina in Venice.



Exhibition view of "Everybody Talks About the Weather" Fondazione Prada, Venice, photo: Marco Cappelletti, courtesy: Fondazione Prada

"The exhibition project," says the curator **Dieter Roelstraete**, "proposes to field a 'meteorological' vision of art as a historically reliable and conceptually rich way to deal with the 'unthinkable', and possibly help pave a way out of our current paradox". An exhibition that juxtaposes contemporary works and those of great masters from the past with academic and scientific research, subdividing the itinerary into themes that include the proposed works and in-depth scientific studies developed in collaboration with the New Institute Centre For Environmental Humanities (NICHE) of Ca' Foscari University in Venice. A different perspective for the visitor, involved in a dimension that interweaves art and science, with in-depth studies of the artists juxtaposed with graphics, images and scientific data.



Exhibition view of "Everybody Talks About the Weather" Fondazione Prada, Venice, photo: Marco Cappelletti, courtesv: Fondazione Prada. Artwork: Paolo Cirio. *Climate Culnable* series. 2021.

The title, *Everybody Talks About the Weather*, is a reference to one of the first works to greet visitors as they enter the exhibition: a poster from 1968 by the German Socialist Student Union (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund) depicting Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin with the slogan 'Alle reden vom Wetter. Wir nicht' (Everyone talks about the weather. We don't). Ironic to think how, at that time, the political party considered it 'useless' to deal with the weather in view of other much more important issues, compared to our present, when it is unthinkable not to talk about the climate threat as a major and global emergency.



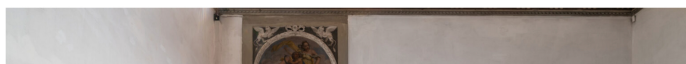
Exhibition view of "Everybody Talks About the Weather" Fondazione Prada, Venice, photo: Marco Cappelletti, courtesy: Fondazione Prada. Artworks: Pieter Vermeersch, *Troubled Air -Tribute to Sunn O)))*-, 2023, courtesy Galerie Greta Meert (Brussels), Galerie Perrotin (Paris, Hong Kong, New York, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai, Dubai), ProjecteSD (Barcelona), and P420 (Bologna); Nicolas Poussin, *L'Hiver ou Le deluge*, 1660 – 64, Musée du Louvre, Paris, exhibition copy

On the ground floor we find exhibition copies of great masterpieces, including: *The Tempest* by **Giorgione**, *The Sea of Ice* by **Caspar David Friedrich**, *Hunters in the Snow* by **Pieter Bruegel**, *Rain, Steam and Speed* by **Joseph Mallord William Turner**, *Cloud Study* by **John Constable**, *Winter Landscape with Ice Skaters* by **Hendrick Avercamp**. Artists that until then we did not consider as weather chroniclers, but now, in the rooms of the historic Ca' Corner Palace, we recognise as unparalleled observers of the 'weather'. John Constable, for instance, was literally called a 'man of the air' (Luftmensch): in little more than a year (1821-1822) he painted about a hundred representations of London skies. Considered to be one of the most representative artists of Romanticism, Constable, who sought the sublime and the moving in the clouds, left a true pictorial reportage of the celestial landscape between Hampstead Heath and Brighton and its continuous evolution.



Exhibition view of "Everybody Talks About the Weather" Fondazione Prada, Venice, photo: Marco Cappelletti, courtesy: Fondazione Prada. Artwork: Vivian Suter, *Untitled*, 2025, copyright Vivian Suter / courtesy the artist and Karma International, Zurich; Gaga, Mexico City; Gladstone Gallery, New York/ Brussels; Proyectos Ultravioleta, Guatemala City; and Stampa, Basel

Arriving at the main floor of the exhibition, the work of **Vivian Suter** (Buenos Aires, 1949), a Swiss artist born in Argentina, is of great visual impact: large, colourful canvases, stretched out in a row one after the other like laundry in the wind, impose their presence for a good half of the large old hall (*Untitled*). **Nina Canell** (Växjö, 1979), a Swedish artist, is the author of *Moody*, a sculptural group made up of glass lightning spheres, discoloured by the effect of discharges of electricity and atmospheric events, assembled in vertical sections. These globiform totems evoke the theme of "prediction", understood as the reading of future weather, a recurring obsession in the life of man: on the one hand, the spheres as a method of interrupting the passage of electric charge and acting as an electrostatic dissipation in the event of lightning, thus attempting to control atmospheric agents and any risks of danger; on the other hand, the very ancient art of crystalomancy, i.e. the prediction of the human future through the crystal ball, which is said to have had the capacity to reflect a special divinatory power. Both symbolise a human attempt to dominate matters beyond one's control.





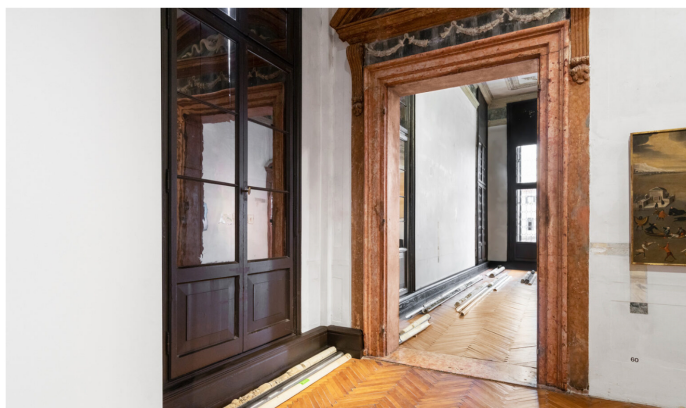
Exhibition view of "Everybody Talks About the Weather" Fondazione Prada, Venice, photo: Marco Cappelletti, courtesy: Fondazione Prada. From left to right: Pae White, *Kinked Rain / Gold*, 2022, courtesy the artist and kaufmann repetto Milan / New York; Jason Dodge, *In Alvorada, in Brazil, Vera Juanqueira wove wool yarn the color of night and the same length as the distance from the earth to above the weather*, collezione Marco Ghigi, Bologna; Fredrik Værsløv, *Untitled (indipendenza studio #5)*, 2012, collezione privata / Private collection

The large tapestry by **Pae White** (Pasadena, 1963), *Kinked Rain / Gold*, hangs on the wall with elegance and refinement with a Japanese influence. Turquoise clouds embroidered on a dark background later reveal the rain of thin golden threads. An atmospheric element, rain, considered a saviour in times of great drought, especially for those who, like White, live in areas subject to increasingly devastating heat waves in recent years.



Exhibition view of "Everybody Talks About the Weather" Fondazione Prada, Venice, photo: Marco Cappelletti, courtesy: Fondazione Prada. Artwork: Goshka Macuga, *Who Gave Us a Sponge to Erase the Horizon?*, 2022, courtesy the artist and Kate MacGarry, London

**Himali Singh Soin's** (Delhi) immersive installation, *We are opposite like that*, is part of a project undertaken by the Indian artist in 2017 following a trip to the Norwegian islands of Svalbard, in the Arctic Ocean: two projections floating on a sheet of water, accompanied by sounds and stories, show Soin, wrapped in a thermal blanket, wandering through a glacial landscape, at once white and treacherous, a mirror of a mythical past without a human being but also a warning of a probable future. The melting of the ice reflects unchallenged anthropocentrism, the primary cause of the ongoing climate change and emergency. **Goshka Macuga** (Warsaw, 1967) also expresses herself on the subject with her large tapestry *Who gave us a sponge to erase the horizon?*, whose title is a quotation from Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Gaia Scienza* and the parable of the mad man, who wanders around the market in the morning light and denounces the death of God by human beings. The three-dimensional visual plot depicts a procession of activists disguised as sea creatures, staging a surreal protest inspired by the UN Conference held in Glasgow in 2021, where a gathering of powerful politicians from around the world discussed climate change without achieving any concrete results.



Exhibition view of "Everybody Talks About the Weather" Fondazione Prada, Venice, photo: Marco Cappelletti, courtesy: Fondazione Prada. Artwork: Giorgio Andreotta Calò, *Carotaggi (Venezia)*, 2014, courtesy Giorgio Andreotta Calò

The analysis of the issue unfolds like a dance between the most varied artistic forms of observation of weather and landscape, which is the first witness: from the Japanese masterpieces by **Katsushika Hokusai** *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji* and **Ichiryusai Hiroshige's** *Mount Haruna under the Snow*, to those of masters such as **Gustave Courbet** with *The Wave*, up to more recent studies such as the *Carotaggi* by the Venetian artist **Giorgio Andreotta Calò**, known for his participation at the Venice Biennale in 2017 in the Italian Pavilion. "Everybody Talks About the Weather" is an exhibition that unites great masterpieces with works by contemporary and emerging artists, together with scientific research related to the theme; the itinerary makes the visitor aware of an important evolution in the relationship between the climate and the influence of meteorological changes. An essential intervention by Fondazione Prada which, with this project, reflects on the important and more than ever necessary semantics of 'time'.



Exhibition view of "Everybody Talks About the Weather" Fondazione Prada, Venice, photo: Marco Cappelletti, courtesy: Fondazione Prada

Complete list of artists in the exhibition: Sophia Al-Maria, Giorgio Andreotta Calò, Shunivai Ashoona, Anonimo veneto, Ursula Biemann, Nina Canell, Vija Celmins, Paolo Cirio, Gustave Courbet, Vittore Grubicy de Dragon, Jason Dodge, Ayan Farah, Theaster Gates, Beate Geissler & Oliver Sann, Antony Gormley, Hans Haacke, Ichoryusai Hiroshige, Katsushika Hokusai, Jitish Kallat, AnneChristine Klarmann, Zdeněk Košek, Goshka Macuga, Iñigo Mangano-Ovalle, Santu Mofokeng, Plinio Nomellini, Carlo Francesco Nuvolone, Alix Oge, Richard Onyango, Chantal Peñalosa, Dan Peterman, Nick Raffel, Raqs Media Collective, Gerhard Richter, Thomas Ruff, Tiffany Sia, Himali Singh Soin, Vivian Suter, Fredrik Vaerslev, Pieter Vermeersch, Pae White, Tsutomu Yamamoto, Yang Yongliang.

**Paola Natalia Pepa**

Info:

*Everybody Talks About the Weather*

Una mostra di ricerca a cura di Dieter Roelstraete

20/05/2023 – 26/11/2023

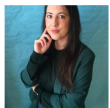
Fondazione Prada, Ca' Corner della Regina

Santa Croce 2215

Venezia

T +39 02 56 66 26 34

[fondazioneprada.org](http://fondazioneprada.org)



**Paola Natalia Pepa**

Independent curator specialized in Argentine art, with studies and publications on the subject ("Argentina at the Venice Biennale of Art" in *Storie della Biennale di Venezia*, Ed. Ca' Foscari, 2020), founder in 2014 of [arteargentina.it](http://arteargentina.it), the first Italian platform dedicated to Argentine art in Italy. She currently collaborates in Venice with galleries and artists.

[www.arteargentina.it/](http://www.arteargentina.it/)



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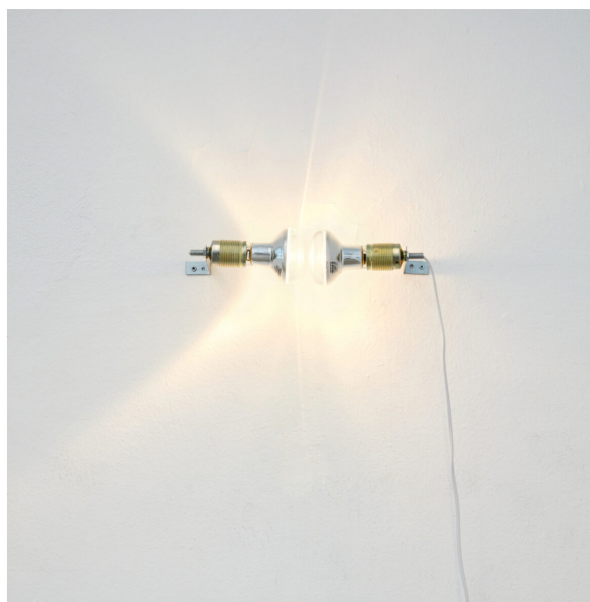
## Jason Dodge and Giovanni Termini. The humanness of objects

by EMANUELA ZANON • 10 NOVEMBER 2022 • REVIEWS

Contemporary artistic production, which is extremely sensitive in acknowledging the crisis of every social and cultural model in the age of interdisciplinarity, post truth and interspecies, seems to react to the generalized inability to conceive the new with an infinite reinterpretation of the existing. The result is an (often unsuccessful) attempt to untangle the complexity of our increasingly contaminated world and to find a possible way out of the current epistemological stalemate. The emphasis on the elusive and precarious nature of the art object, cleared by the movements that between the 1960s and 1980s undertook to subvert the values of the artistic system, has resulted in recent decades in a babelic multiplication of “art that does not seem art” which, no longer supported by programmatic manifestos and shared theories, is more eloquent than ever in narrating the powerlessness of post modernity. The massive presence of everyday objects (from time to time modified, raped, merged, accumulated, saved, photographed, recycled or simply presented) in art, which traces the overproduction of the global market, is a phenomenon to which we are so used that perhaps we forget, in the face of each specific case, to ask ourselves about the real need for this tool and its ability to be meaningful. After generations of illustrious artists have effectively demonstrated that “even the object as such can be art”, how many are today able to base their language on the object regardless of this now obvious postulate?

The exhibition *The humanness of objects* at KAPPA-NöUN, an exhibition space founded in San Lazzaro di Savena (Bologna) by the collector Marco Ghigi, brings together two artists – the American Jason Dodge (Newton, Pennsylvania, 1969) and the Italian Giovanni Termini (Assoro, 1972) – paradigmatic for their rare aptitude to explore the intrinsic expressiveness of objects, intended as their privileged artistic material, without this choice becoming obscure in the umpteenth pleonastic demonstration that even the ordinary sphere can be translated into the aesthetic one. Both are masters in creating settings in which domestic and residual elements become the protagonists of elusive stories, which outline a sort of negative portrait of our times, making visible and tangible what in the physical world can only be intuited or imagined. Dodge owes much of his compositional syntax to procedures typical of poetic writing, such as the use of existing words (and in his case also things) that acquire new meaning according to their reciprocal relationships. His works are perfectly calibrated devices which trigger in the viewer the desire to discover what is hidden, that is satisfied only if the observer manages to put his own emotions and personal projections into play. Termini’s works, which are equally coherent in their internal logic, make use of materials usually connected to industry and work to build structures in which a camouflaged imperfection acts from the inside to insinuate flaws in our perception of reality and paradoxically reveal unsuspected ironic and affective implications. The title of the exhibition, as it is explained by the curator Simone Ciglia, connects the poetics of the two artists with the so-called *Thing Theory* “formulated at the beginning of the 2000s by Bill Brown, who started from the distinction between object and thing originally drawn by the philosopher Martin Heidegger. If the first – the object – is linked to the domain of functionality, the second – the thing – arises from the transformation of the object when its function ceases “. When an object stops identifying with its own usefulness, it therefore becomes a “thing” that carries an individual soul, an expression of a layered experience which, by introducing the subjective dimension, inevitably refers to a human component, preponderant despite its absence.

These reflections materialize in the synergy between the works on display, all belonging to the Ghigi collection, starting with *Ostacoli* (2019) by Giovanni Termini, which ideally takes on the task of creating the the compositional framework of the exhibition. It is no coincidence that this work, consisting of a sequence of barriers to be overcome (a speed bollard, a road bump, a pole supported by tripods, a structure of tubes, a beam, a barrier) chromatically unified by a blue paint, was originally designed in dialogue with a museum, Palazzo Ducale in Urbino[1] (from which two of the aforementioned obstacles were borrowed). Through the concept of stumbling, which contains a dense genealogy of



*The Dreamers* in the corridors of the Louvre, in turn committed to breaking the record (happily superfluous) to visit the French museum in less than 9 minutes and 45 seconds, set by the three characters directed by Jean-Luc Godard in *Bande à part*. As the trio lightly dodge the guards, we too are invited to consider the impediments we encounter as incitements to take a leap above the light blue (that of the paint is the exact shade in which the sky meets the sea at the brightest point of Leonardo da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks*).

Jason Dodge's two blue wool blankets (*In Alvorada, in Brazil, Vera Junqueira wove wool yarn the color of night and the same length as the distance from the earth to above the weather*, 2013, and *In Turin, Cristina Donato wove merino wool yarn that is the color of night a length equaling the distance from the earth to above the weather*), which we find folded to the ground, as if to offer refreshment to those who were preparing for the obstacle course just mentioned, also allude to an overcoming. Obviously, even here the refreshment is not physical, but poetic and mental, deriving from the dream of being able to reach the troposphere following a thread or having at hand a fragment of the sky. It is the artist who decides which color of the particular night he wants to be weaved, but the processing of the yarn is entrusted to another person, whose name and the instructions she had to follow are spelled out in the title. In these works Dodge implements two canonical conceptual expedients, the delegation of action and the textual device as an activator of physical matter, but the result appears anything but cold, proof of the artist's sensitivity in transmuting objects into emotional conductors that trigger the experience and participation of the public.

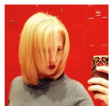
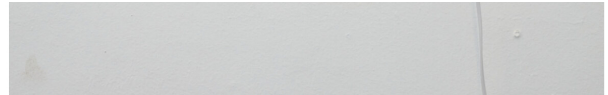
A very successful dialogue is also established between *Untitled* (2021) by Jason Dodge, a pair of facing bulbs (one off and the other on) in which it is at first glance difficult to understand which is the brightest and *Inclinata* (2009) by Giovanni Termini, a structure made of nine wooden joists compacted by a red adhesive tape, eight with a carrara marble head, one in which the head is simulated with painting. In both works we find a declared fiction immediately denied by the evidence, the taste for semantic ambiguity (the light bulb made to illuminate lives on reflected light and the head of the technical jargon is assimilated to a thinking brain) and above all a moving metaphor of mutual aid that transforms fragility into strength. The tutelary deity of the exhibition, which welcomes asleep (but at the same time mysteriously alert) the visitor at the entrance, is *Diamond inside of an owl* by Dodge, a living idol even though he is already dead, which holds within it the secret of the irreducibility of the art work to the sum of its constituent elements.

[1] on the occasion of the *Incontro a Palazzo* exhibition, in which Giovanni Termini, Luigi Carboni, Paolo Icaro and Eliseo Mattiacci were entrusted with the plastic and pictorial interpretation of the lofts on the noble floor of the Ducal Palace in Urbino.

Info:

Jason Dodge and Giovanni Termini. *L'umanità degli oggetti*  
curated by Simone Ciglia  
7/10/2022 – 11/12/2022  
KAPPA-NÖUN  
Via Imelde Lambertini 5, San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

For all the images: Jason Dodge e Giovanni Termini. *L'umanità degli oggetti*, installation view at KAPPA-NÖUN, photo Carlo Favero, courtesy KAPPA-NÖUN, San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)



**Emanuela Zanon**

Graduated in art history at DAMS in Bologna, city where she continued to live and work, she specialized in Siena with Enrico Crispolti. Curious and attentive to the becoming of the contemporary, she believes in the power of art to make life more interesting and she loves to explore its latest trends through dialogue with artists, curators and gallery owners. She considers writing a form of reasoning and analysis that reconstructs the connection between the artist's creative path and the surrounding context.

[intervistarte.wordpress.com/](https://intervistarte.wordpress.com/)



Home > Articoli > **L'umanità degli oggetti / The humanness of objects. Jason Dodge – Giovanni Termini**

**A PARTIRE DA UN RAGIONAMENTO INTORNO ALLE OPERE DI JASON DODGE E GIOVANNI TERMINI, ESPOSTE DI RECENTE NELLA MOSTRA L'UMANITÀ DEGLI OGGETTI, NEGLI SPAZI DI KAPPA NÖUN A SAN LAZZARO DI SAVENA (BO), SIMONE CIGLIA, CURATORE DEL PROGETTO, APPROFONDISCE QUELLA CHE È STATA DEFINITA COME TEORIA DELLE COSE.**

*The eagerness of objects to be what we are afraid to do cannot help but move us.\**  
(Frank O'Hara)

«Cominciamo a confrontarci con la coseità (*thingness*) degli oggetti quando smettono di lavorare per noi: quando il trapano si rompe, quando l'auto si ferma, quando la finestra si sporca, quando il loro flusso all'interno dei circuiti di produzione e distribuzione, consumo ed esposizione, è stato arrestato, per quanto momentaneamente. La storia degli oggetti che si affermano come cose, quindi, è la storia di un mutato rapporto con il soggetto umano e così la storia di come la cosa in realtà nomina, più che un oggetto, una particolare relazione soggetto-oggetto. Mentre circolano nelle nostre vite, guardiamo attraverso gli oggetti (per vedere cosa rivelano sulla storia, la società, la natura o la cultura – soprattutto, cosa rivelano su di noi), ma intravediamo soltanto le cose». <sup>1</sup> Delineando quella che è stata codificata come *Thing Theory* (Teoria delle cose) al principio degli anni 2000, Bill Brown prendeva le mosse dalla distinzione heideggeriana fra *oggetto* e *cosa*: se il primo è legato al dominio della funzionalità, la seconda si genera dalla trasformazione dell'oggetto quando cessa la sua funzione. Brown era stato abile nell'applicare la sua teoria al campo letterario, investigando la relazione fra umani e oggetti nell'ambito della produzione americana a cavallo fra Otto e Novecento. Con l'evidenza ancora maggiore data dall'incombenza fisica, è tuttavia nell'arte visiva che vediamo dispiegarsi il regno degli oggetti. La loro proliferazione, soprattutto a partire dal secondo dopoguerra, è riassunta nello spostamento d'asse rilevato da Baudrillard: se la modernità ha costituito lo sfondo storico per l'emergenza del soggetto, il dominio dell'oggetto è invece il marchio della postmodernità.

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Jason Dodge / Giovanni Termini, *L'umanità degli oggetti*, veduta della mostra, 2022, Kappa Noun, San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

Questi gli oggetti – o forse le cose, direbbe Heidegger – radunati per questa mostra. Sono stati prodotti – o, meglio, pensati e assemblati – da due artisti: Jason Dodge e Giovanni Termini. Pochi anni ne separano le date di nascita – 1969 il primo, 1972 il secondo – più ampia è invece la distanza geografica – Stati Uniti e Italia – ma un'attitudine condivisa giustifica l'appaiamento in questa occasione. Un'attitudine che trova appunto nella dimensione oggettuale il nucleo generativo, fino all'ipotesi di una *thing practice* (pratica delle cose).

«Non sappiamo cosa siano la maggior parte delle cose, o dove siano state, o cosa ci sia dentro». <sup>2</sup> (Jason Dodge)

In un'intervista, Dodge descrive la propria pratica come fondata sull'uso di oggetti quotidiani: la loro presentazione all'interno degli spazi espositivi convenzionalmente associati all'arte, consente secondo l'artista uno sguardo più profondo sul mondo e la possibilità di svelare l'«umanità degli oggetti che usiamo». <sup>3</sup> Attraverso un processo di trasmutazione di natura poetica – non è incidentale l'interesse dell'artista per la poesia e la sua attività in campo editoriale – Dodge svela il potenziale narrativo insito nell'oggettualità, anche quella più feriale. Tramite semplici gesti di marca concettuale (come prelievi, accostamenti, assemblaggi), questa dimensione mondana viene riscattata in una apertamente umanistica: «In generale, sono le persone, i soggetti che mancano in quello che faccio – spiega l'artista – Ti sto parlando di loro, ma essi non ci sono. È come se stessi usando la sensazione di perdita come materiale». <sup>4</sup> L'esempio più illuminante è fornito dalla coppia di lampade affrontate in *Untitled* (2021): l'una, collegata alla presa elettrica, è accesa; l'altra, priva di alimentazione, s'illumina grazie al riflesso della compagna. Pur partendo da una condizione asimmetrica, addirittura opposta, una comunione è raggiunta attraverso la metafora del bacio luminoso.

La *coseità* – apparentemente ottusa – sembra dominare le due coperte, diverse per dimensioni e fattura ma simili nel colore, piegate e poggiate a terra. Questo carattere, che le renderebbe indistinguibili da normali oggetti di uso quotidiano, è tuttavia smentito dal titolo. Nel primo caso, esso informa che *Ad Alvorada, in Brasile, Vera Junqueira ha tessuto filati di lana del colore della notte e della stessa lunghezza della distanza dalla terra a sopra il tempo meteorologico*. Nel secondo, invece, che *A Torino, Cristina Donato ha tessuto un filato di lana merino che è del colore della notte e di una lunghezza pari alla distanza dalla terra a sopra il tempo meteorologico*. Parte di una serie, le coperte sono accomunate dal medesimo processo di tessitura, che prevede l'utilizzo di diverse tipologie di filato la cui lunghezza è pari alla distanza fra la terra e la troposfera, lo spazio oltre il quale il tempo meteorologico (invocato nel titolo) non esiste. Attraverso questo dispositivo testuale, caratteristico del paradigma concettuale, lo spettatore ha accesso mentalmente a uno spazio altrimenti esperibile solo nell'esperienza di volo aereo, uno strato di significato che proietta il manufatto oltre la sua materialità. Un ulteriore aspetto ordito in questa serie ha a che fare con l'agenzia umana. Replicando un altro topos concettuale, la realizzazione del lavoro è delegata a una tessitrice. «Le cose non esistono senza essere piene di persone», <sup>5</sup> ricorda Bruno Latour: qui l'oggetto svela la sua umanità dichiarando il proprio processo esecutivo, a opera di una persona identificata da nome e cognome.



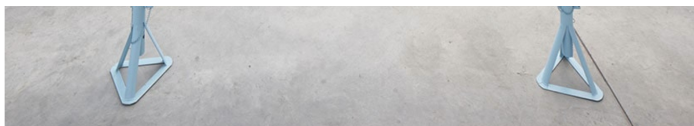
Jason Dodge / Giovanni Termini, *L'umanità degli oggetti*, veduta della mostra, 2022, Kappa Noun, San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

La chiave interpretativa contenuta nel titolo si fa più enigmatica nel caso del gufo. Il titolo asserisce che all'interno dell'animale imbalsamato è nascosto un diamante: questo, tuttavia, è invisibile allo spettatore, come pure il contenuto della scatola di cartone su cui l'uccello è adagiato (è privilegio del collezionista poterla aprire e scoprire il lenzuolo e il cuscino che l'autore ha apparecchiato all'interno). Qui è il processo di tassidermia a ridurre un essere vivente allo stato di cosa. La morte, riflette Michael Taussig a proposito delle poesie di Sylvia Plath, sembra possedere la capacità di trasformare in oggetti le persone e allo stesso tempo riportare in vita oggetti inanimati.<sup>6</sup> In questa duplice trasmutazione sembra rimasto appollaiato anche il rapace: esso custodisce inoltre al suo interno qualcosa di prezioso ma inaccessibile, se non attraverso il pensiero: «La scultura è uno dei pochi luoghi al mondo in cui puoi descrivere cose a cui non puoi accedere nel modo consueto»,<sup>7</sup> dice Dodge.

Lo stesso vitalismo materialistico abita la scultura di Giovanni Termini. Fermamente situato in uno spazio che si proietta nella dimensione temporale, aperto al processo che ne detta i materiali, il lavoro di Termini si nutre – come dichiara l'autore – «proprio dei conflitti che cerca, inutilmente, di sedare. Non vedo altri stimoli alla ricerca»,<sup>8</sup> conclude.

Questa tensione agonistica è esplicitata fin dal titolo di un'opera che afferma la nozione di arte come inciampo, impedimento, intralcio (*Ostacoli*, 2019). L'installazione allinea appunto una serie di ostacoli: un dissuasore cordonato, un dosso stradale, un'asta sorretta da una coppia di treppiedi, una struttura di tubi innocenti, una putrella, una transenna; la sequela è unificata da un'uniforme verniciatura celeste. Nata dall'incontro con un dispositivo museale, l'opera allunga lo spunto iniziale di critica istituzionale a una più ampia considerazione del rapporto fra opera e spettatore, questione cruciale nella contemporaneità. Fin dall'emblematico readymade duchampiano – un attaccapanni fissato a pavimento che si trasforma in inciampo per l'artista e quindi per lo spettatore (*Trébuchet*, 1917) – l'opera contemporanea sembra descrivere una vera e propria genealogia della caduta.<sup>9</sup> Erede di questa tradizione (apparentemente) rovinosa, Termini la eleva al parossismo attraverso la moltiplicazione e variazione del fattore di ostruzione. Il percorso atletico, tuttavia, straniato cromaticamente, è ingaggiato come produttivo: l'ostacolo è ridefinizione di una traiettoria, scoperta di una possibilità imprevista, atto generativo.





Jason Dodge / Giovanni Termini, *L'umanità degli oggetti*, veduta della mostra, 2022, Kappa Nôun, San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

*Ostacoli* ribadisce la qualità oggettiva che caratterizza il lavoro dello scultore dagli esordi, come puntualizza Marco Bazzini: «Nelle sue opere Termini non introduce oggetti da lui realizzati manualmente o in altra maniera artigianale. Nessun corpo, quindi, appare estraneo o incongruo rispetto ai caratteri dei materiali reperibili sul mercato che danno origine alle sue conformazioni. Nelle sue sculture la qualità degli oggetti mantiene un criterio oggettivo (nel senso proprio di una identità dell'oggetto)». <sup>10</sup> Questa postura oggettiva è però contraddetta da un'antropomorfizzazione a volte trasparente nei titoli delle opere, che tradiscono un investimento emotivo: la scultura di Termini è *In attesa, Necessariamente tesa, Momentaneamente aperta, Disarmata da se stessa, Stretta all'angolo, Progressiva, Delimitata, Riversa*. Così, anche la seconda opera in esposizione è *Inclinata* (2009). Qui nove morali – travetti di legno impiegati in edilizia nell'orditura delle coperture lignee – sono uniti in file di tre e tenuti insieme da un nastro adesivo americano di colore rosso. Sulla sommità di otto elementi è alloggiato un cubo in marmo di Carrara; il nono è invece semplicemente verniciato di bianco (la differenza è tradita dalla mancanza di ortogonalità). L'insieme è poggiato, inclinato, sulla parete. Questo stato di transitorietà suggerisce un senso di temporaneo abbandono, organizzato tuttavia per una possibile rimessa in funzione. Un momento di equilibrio che, nella molteplicità di elementi fra loro coesi, potrebbe aprirsi a metafora sociale. Seguendo in parallelo la doppia traiettoria degli artisti, la *Thing Theory* entra all'inizio degli anni '10 in una seconda fase, affollata di voci dalle molteplici intonazioni: il decentramento del soggetto, l'ontologia orientata all'oggetto, l'ecocritica, il postumano. Fra queste, l'«ecologia politica delle cose» tracciata dalla teorica politica Jane Bennett postula l'esistenza di una «materialità vitale» («vital materiality») che abita tanto i corpi animati quanto quelli inanimati. <sup>11</sup> Se il suo invito è rivolto a riconoscere le forze non-umane come agenti attivi nella storia, l'arte da tempo esibisce la vitalità della materia, e il lavoro di Dodge e Termini ne è una testimonianza. Gli artisti sembrano rivendicare quel «destino degli oggetti» che Baudrillard lamentava negletto, ridotto a povertà a scapito dello «splendore del soggetto». <sup>12</sup>

«Ed ecco le cose più solide sfuggire alla prigionia del proprio volume, quelle più comuni smettere i panni ormai logori del familiare. Improvvisamente nude, le cose scoprono se stesse. Le cose più minuscole divengono i germi di mondi interi. Un oggetto può così essere il polo d'una meditazione sull'universo. Come dicono i filosofi, ciascun oggetto può diventare una "apertura sul mondo"». <sup>13</sup> (Gaston Bachelard)

## Settembre 2022

\* L'entusiasmo degli oggetti di / essere ciò che abbiamo paura di fare / non può fare a meno di commuoverci.

1. B. Brown, *Thing Theory*, in «Critical Inquiry», vol. 28, n. 1, Things, Autumn 2001, p. 4.

2. J. Dodge, dichiarazione dell'artista, in <https://caseykaplangallery.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/JDPPress-Kit.e.pdf>.

3. Collezione Maramotti – Jason Dodge, *A permanently open window*, in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i5UtYzJ39o>.

4. J. Dodge, dichiarazione dell'artista, in <https://caseykaplangallery.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/JDPPress-Kit.e.pdf>.

5. B. Latour, "The Berlin Key or How to Do Words with Things", trad. di Lydia Davis, in *Matter, Materiality, and Modern Culture*, ed. P. M. Graves-Brown, Routledge, Londra – New York 2000, pp. 10, 20.

6. Michael Taussig, *Dying Is an Art, Like Everything Else*, in «Critical Inquiry», vol. 28, n. 1, Things, Autumn 2001, pp. 305-316.

7. Collezione Maramotti – Jason Dodge, cit.

8. Giovanni Termini, statement inedito.

11. J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter. A political ecology of things*, Duke University Press, Durham 2010.

12. J. Baudrillard, *Fatal strategies*, trad. di P.Beitchman e W.G.J. Niesluchoski, ed. Jim Fleming, New York, 1990, p. 111.

13. C. Bachelard, *Il diritto di sognare*, trad. di M.Bianchi, Edizioni Dedalo, Bari 1975, p. 155.

Scroll to top

**THE HUMANNESS OF OBJECTS. JASON DODGE – GIOVANNI TERMINI**

*The eagerness of objects to  
be what we are afraid to do  
cannot help but move us  
(Frank O'Hara)*

“We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the window gets filthy, when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily. The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relationship to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation. As they circulate through our lives, we look through objects (to see what they disclose about history, society, nature, or culture – above all, *what* they disclose about us), but we only catch a glimpse of things.”<sup>1</sup> Outlining what was codified as Thing Theory at the beginning of the 2000s, the literary theorist Bill Brown started from the Heideggerian difference between *object* and *thing*: if the former is linked to the domain of functionality, the latter is generated by the transformation of the object when its function ceases. Brown was keen to apply his theory to the literary field, investigating the relationship between humans and objects in American literature at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, it is in the art world that we see the realm of objects unfolding with the greater weight of their physicality. The proliferation of objects, especially after World War II, is summed up in the shifting of the subject-object axis noted by Baudrillard: if modernity constituted the historical background for the emergence of the subject, the dominion of the object is instead the hallmark of postmodernity.

A taxidermized owl.

A series of obstacles of different materials and shapes.

A pair of light bulbs hanging on the wall, facing each other.

Two blankets folded and placed on the ground.

A bundle of nine wooden joists tied together.



Jason Dodge / Giovanni Termini, *L'umanità degli oggetti*, veduta della mostra, 2022, Kappa Noun, San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

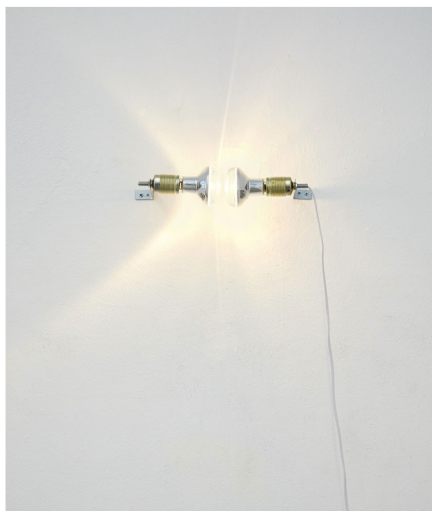
These are the objects – or perhaps the *things*, Heidegger would say – gathered

geographical distance divide their countries of origin – United States and Italy. Yet a shared attitude motivates their pairing on this occasion, an attitude that finds its generative nucleus in the objectual dimension, leading up to the hypothesis of a *thing practice*.

“You don't generally know what things are by looking at them. Nor do you know what they were, what they have inside of them or what they've touched.”<sup>2</sup> (Jason Dodge)

In an interview, Dodge describes his practice as founded on the use of everyday objects: their presentation within exhibition spaces conventionally associated with art, allows a deeper look at the world and the possibility of unveiling the “humanness of the objects we use.”<sup>3</sup> Through a process of transmutation in a poetic register – the artist's interest in poetry and his activity in the publishing field is not incidental – Dodge reveals the narrative potential inherent in objectivity, even of the most quotidian variety. Through simple conceptual gestures (such as appropriation, combination, and *assemblage*), this worldly dimension is redeemed in an openly humanistic manner: “Generally, it is the people, the subjects that are lacking in what I do – the artist explains – I'm talking to you about them, but they're not there. It's as if I were using the feeling of loss as material.”<sup>4</sup> The most illuminating example of this attitude is provided by the pair of lamps that constitute *Untitled* (2021): one, connected to the electrical outlet, is on; the other, without power, lights up thanks to the reflection from its partner. Although starting from an asymmetrical, even opposite, condition, a communion is achieved through the metaphor of the luminous kiss.

Thingness – apparently obtuse – seems to dominate two blankets, different in size and workmanship but similar in color, folded and placed on the ground. Their thingly character, which would make them indistinguishable from normal everyday objects, is however denied by the title: In the first blanket, the lengthy title reads, *In Alvorada, in Brazil, Vera Junqueira wove wool yarn the color of night and the same length as the distance from the earth to above the weather*; the second title is *In Turin, Cristina Donato wove merino wool yarn that is the color of night, and a length equaling the distance from the earth to above the weather*. Part of a series, the two blankets share the same weaving process, involving the use of different types of yarn whose length is equal to the distance between the earth and the troposphere, the space beyond which meteorological time (invoked in the title) does not exist. Through this textual device, characteristic of conceptual art, the viewer mentally accesses a space that would otherwise only be experienced in aerial flight, a layer of meaning that projects the artifact beyond its materiality. Another major thread woven into this series has to do with human agency. Employing yet another conceptual *topos*, the realization of the work is delegated to a weaver. “Things do not exist without being full of people,”<sup>5</sup> recalls Bruno Latour. Here the object reveals its humanness by declaring the process of execution, by a person identified by name and surname.



Jason Dodge / Giovanni Termini, *L'umanità degli oggetti*, veduta della mostra, 2022, Kappa Noun, San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

The interpretative key contained in these titles becomes more enigmatic in the case of the owl (*Diamond inside an owl*). Here, the title asserts that a diamond is hidden inside the stuffed animal: this, however, is invisible to the viewer, as is the content of the cardboard box on which the bird rests (it is the collector's privilege to be able to open it and discover the sheet and pillow that the author has set inside). Here it's the taxidermy process that reduces a living being to the state of a thing. Death, observes Michael Taussig reflecting upon Sylvia Plath's poems, seems to have the ability to transform people into objects and at the same time to bring inanimate objects back to life.<sup>6</sup> The bird of prey seems to have remained perched in this double transmutation: it also contains something precious but accessible only by means of thought: "Sculpture is one of the really rare places in the world where you can start to describe certain things that you can't access specifically,"<sup>7</sup> says Dodge.

The same materialistic vitalism inhabits Giovanni Termini's sculpture. Firmly located in a space that projects itself into the temporal dimension, open to the process that dictates the materials, Termini's work is nourished – as the author states – "precisely by the conflicts that it tries, in vain, to quell." Indeed, "I don't see any other stimuli for research,"<sup>8</sup> he concludes.

This agonistic tension is made explicit starting from the title of the work, which affirms the notion of art as a stumbling block, impediment, hindrance (*Obstacles*, 2019). The installation indeed aligns a series of obstacles: a cordoned bollard, a road bump, a pole supported by a pair of tripods, a structure of scaffolding pipes, a beam, a barrier. The sequence is unified by a uniform light blue paint. Born from the encounter with a museum device, the work extends the initial spurt of institutional critique to a broader consideration of the relationship between the artwork and the viewer, a crucial issue in contemporary art. From the emblematic Duchampian readymade – a coat hanger fixed to the floor that turns into a stumbling block for the artist and therefore the viewer (*Trébuchet*, 1917) – the artwork seems to describe a genealogy of the fall.<sup>9</sup> Heir to this (apparently) ruinous tradition, Termini elevates it to a paroxysm through the multiplication and variation of obstructions. The athletic path, however, chromatically alienated, is engaged as productive: the obstacle is the redefinition of a trajectory, the discovery of unexpected possibilities, a generative act.



Jason Dodge / Giovanni Termini, *L'umanità degli oggetti*, veduta della mostra, 2022, Kappa Noun, San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

*Obstacles* reaffirms the thingly quality that characterizes the sculptor's work from the beginning. As Marco Bazzini points out: "Termini does not introduce into his works objects made by himself manually or in any other artisanal way. No body, therefore, appears foreign or incongruous with respect to the characteristics of the materials available on the market that give rise to its

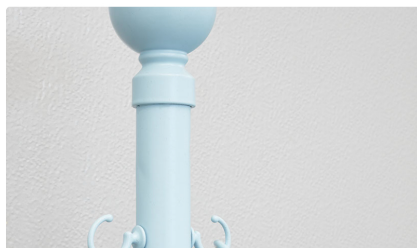
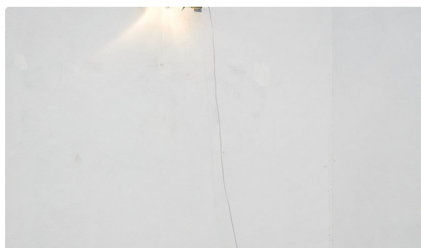
objective posture, however, is contradicted by an anthropomorphizing that is sometimes transparent in the titles of his works, which betray an emotional investment. Termini's sculptures are *In attesa (Waiting)*, *Necessariamente tesa (Necessarily tense)*, *Momentaneamente aperta (Momentarily open)*, *Disarmata da se stessa (Disarmed by itself)*, *Stretta all'angolo (Cornered)*, *Pregressa (Previous)*, *Delimitata (Delimitated)*, *Riversa (Reversed)*. Thus, the second work on display is also *Inclinata (Tilted, 2009)*. Here nine *morali* – wooden joists used in the construction of wooden roofs – are joined in rows of three and held together by an American red adhesive tape. On the top of eight of the *morali* there is a cube made of Carrara marble; the ninth *morale* is instead simply painted white (the difference is betrayed by its lack of orthogonality). The whole structure is placed, inclined, on the wall. This state of transience suggests a sense of temporary abandonment, however organized for a possible restart. A moment of equilibrium that, in the multiplicity of elements cohesive with each other, could open up to a social metaphor.

Following the double trajectory of these artists in parallel, Thing Theory entered a second phase at the beginning of the 2010s, punctuated by multiple motifs: the decentralization of the subject, object-oriented ontology, ecocriticism, and posthumanism. Among these, the “political ecology of things” traced by the political theorist Jane Bennett postulates the existence of a “vital materiality” that inhabits both animate and inanimate bodies.<sup>11</sup> If her invitation is aimed at recognizing non-human forces as active agents in history, art has long exhibited the vitality of matter, and the work of Dodge and Termini bears witness to this. The artists seem to reclaim that “destiny of objects” which Baudrillard lamented as neglected, reduced to poverty at the expense of the “splendor of the subject.”<sup>12</sup>

“And here the most solid things escape the imprisonment of one's own volume, the most common ones disrobe the worn-out clothes of the familiar. Suddenly naked, things discover themselves. The tiniest things become the germs of whole worlds. An object can thus be the pole of a meditation on the universe. As philosophers say, each object can become an 'opening to the world.'”<sup>13</sup> (Gaston Bachelard)

## September 2022

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2. Jason Dodge, artist statement, in <https://caseykaplangallery.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/JDPress-Kit.e.pdf>.
3. Collezione Maramotti – Jason Dodge *A permanently open window*, in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i5UtYzJ39o>.
4. Jason Dodge, artist statement, in <https://caseykaplangallery.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/JDPress-Kit.e.pdf>.
5. Bruno Latour, “The Berlin Key or How to Do Words with Things”, trans. Lydia Davis, in *Matter, Materiality, and Modern Culture*, ed. P. M. Graves-Brown (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.10, 20.
6. Michael Taussig, “Dying Is an Art, Like Everything Else”, in *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 Things, (Autumn, 2001), pp.305-316.
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8. Giovanni Termini, unpublished statement.
9. This genealogy is reconstructed by Alberto Zanchetta in Giovanni Termini e Alberto Zanchetta, *Quella cosa su cui inciampi* (la c., 2020).
10. Marco Bazzini, “Quando il cantiere diventa forma”, in *Giovanni Termini* (Prato: Gli Ori, 2021), p.140.
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13. Gaston Bachelard, *Il diritto di sognare*, trans. Marina Bianchi (Bari: Edizioni Dedalo, 1975), p.155.





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## Jason Dodge at Macro in Rome: a great site-specific work

by CLAUDIA PANSERA • 1 DECEMBER 2021 • REVIEWS

Museum for preventive imagination in Rome wants to represent a new idea of a museum that moves away from the usual exhibition environment to be the scene of a program that frees artists from conventions and allows the public to be an active agent. No longer a didactic and guided education, but polyphonic projects that take down the role of museum-showcase as an elitist place to transform it into an inclusive space, that evolves the new and necessary identity of this institution.

In this rich program, configured as a single exhibition project that will extend until the end of 2022, the exhibition *Cut a Door in the Wolf* by the American artist Jason Dodge, created for the SOLO\MULTI section, is inserted.

Dodge's artistic creative process has always observed a strict connection between visual and tactile perception, as if to create a gap from the apparent reality, to induce a question that becomes personal reflection. The repetitiveness of the materials and objects used by the artist, which becomes redundancy, causes the consequent feeling of estrangement and envelops the viewer in a vortex, which although sometimes shrill, forcing him/her to get to the end.

His works, which have the ability to extend into every corner and totally capture space, imbuing it with meaning and signifiers, cancel the traces of what has been before. In the spaces of the Macro, estranged from any frills, with the mastery of a single breath, Dodge has worked with the apparently confusing details, which harmonize the great site-specific work. Feathers, scraps of paper, scraps of cloth, plastic, pieces of sponge and disparate materials that spread, sometimes piled along the perimeter, throughout the room: a view that dominates the viewer and that could scare him because walking itself alters the work.

Overcoming the rational fear of "ruining" and losing the perception of the place, instinctively, we try to observe eagerly from every perspective, to capture, a general vision and the apparent meaning of those strange objects, which are nothing more than mere matter in metamorphosis. In the center, large palm leaves, which will become with the passing of the days increasingly dry, dominate the tables, accompanied by small white rectangles well wrapped of Ivory soap. Dodge so has cancelled, reshaping the space, the line that separates the exhibition environment from the work to make it part of the same installation.

*Cut a Door in the Wolf* doesn't try to explain the hidden meanings of common objects and materials, but rather it's an approach to the organic and inorganic that puts the viewer at the center of the work, allowing him/her to freely interpret more narratives through a body action that inevitably recalls the involvement of the five senses.

The exhibition, which will welcome the hand of different artists, is therefore a work in progress but is not the end of the experience, rather it is the medium that conveys different sensations and narratives that overturn the way of seeing banal reality, because even in what seems insignificant we can find everything. A real living organism, which mutates and that feeds by the transformations that are brought to it.

Claudia Pansera

Info:

*Cut a Door in the Wolf*

11/10/2021 - 23/01/2022

Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma, Macro

Via Nizza, 138, Roma

[www.museomacro.it](http://www.museomacro.it)



Jason Dodge, *Cut a Door in the Wolf*, exhibition view. MACRO, 2021. Courtesy the artist and Franco Noero, Torino. Ph. Piercarlo Quecchia, DSL Studio



Jason Dodge, *Cut a Door in the Wolf*, detail. MACRO, 2021. Courtesy the artist and Franco Noero, Turin. Ph. Piercarlo Quecchia, DSL Studio



Jason Dodge, *Cut a Door in the Wolf*, detail. MACRO, 2021. Courtesy the artist and Franco Noero, Turin. Ph. Piercarlo Quecchia, DSL Studio

## Studio for Propositional Cinema, Jason Dodge, and Gioacchino Di Bernardo at Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples by Sonia D'Alto

11.03.2020

READING TIME 5'



Studio for Propositional Cinema, "The Storytellers' Fountain: a tale told by A Gust of Wind in the low and dark rooms" at Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples, 2019-2020  
Courtesy: Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples. Photo: Maurizio Esposito

The three solo shows at Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples, take up all the spaces of the building—engaging the spectator in an encounter with form and content, while attempting to display the invisible.

*The Storyteller's Fountain: A Tale Told by a Gust of Wind in the Low and Dark Rooms*, by Studio for Propositional Cinema

Studio for Propositional Cinema's intervention functions as a narrative choreography. By the means of fabulist realism, Studio proposes an alliance between affabulation and critique, framing identity of cultural constructs in social narratives. The basement of Fondazione Morra Greco, host glass cases installed in an ancient Greek niche. On their surfaces, text insinuate the idea of being fragments of preexisting stories. On the first floor, the viewer enters a device-artwork in media res: The scenario here is composed of images on the walls and ceilings that are also reflected in molded mirrors. By moving through the six frescoed rooms, the viewer can follow a tale told by various characters and voices in an audio work. By turning the context of the palace into content, Studio for Propositional Cinema rescripts the legend of Arethusa, as recounted by Gianbattista Basile (1566–1632), the court writer of Prince Caracciolo d'Avellino, the builder of the palace in which Fondazione Morra Greco is located. In the same way that the mirrors reflect the frescoes, the tale reflects historical meanings, not only as things of the past but also as prototypes to be used in many settings. Studio's use of the tale and allegorization conceal many meanings; at the same time, their language unfolds by relying on typical strategies of myth, such as dislocation, ambivalence, and the use of a set of archetypical characters. *The Storyteller's Fountain* reveals struggles between freedom and oppression. A chorus of multiple voices and narratives made up of the images reflected in the mirrors

necessary.

*As Soon As The Invented Language Enters Us Something Else Will Vibrate In Our Skin*, by Jason Dodge (accompanied by a conceptual text by curator and writer Raimundas Malašauskas)

The title of Jason Dodge's show, in the words of the poet CAConrad, alludes to the trembling of meaning whenever language is stretched to its limits. The entire second floor of Fondazione Morra Greco is filled with an installation of objects that appears like a ghostly presence, a memorial. Material care and perception of time are organized in the style of "anarcheology." Local objects are displayed according to a fragmented system, and the stories they carry highlight their anarchic potential, their historic and fragmented status. Jason Dodge captures a displacement of the visible: tales about living beings can be deduced from the presence of nonliving existences, such as the scent of laundry detergent that fills the space. Amnesia and silence are experienced by the visitor, creating an ethereal atmosphere. The space modulates visibility and erasure. The great care that Neapolitans allegedly dedicate to their laundry, an activity performed between the public and the private spheres, is expressed here through material fragments. Political and economic processes incorporate the behavior of people and are transformed by essential agglomerates of objects used up over time. Rows of glass jars, plastic baskets, rags, and scissors remind us of our daily past and dematerialized present. Critical acts of ghosting become poetic by giving space to silent objects that express the multiplicity of meaning and language. Modeled on the imperceptible, Jason Dodge's show also expresses how politics are deeply connected with appearance. Finally, a feeling of always waiting for something still to come pervades the nostalgic composition of the artwork.

*Study for Landscape and Other Animals*, by Luca Gioacchino Di Bernardo

In one single-nave space on the top floor of Fondazione Morra Greco, several large drawings demand that we look beyond figuration. The artworks appear alongside organic vertical strips of fabric, in a display curated by Alessia Volpe. In addition, an herbarium of about fifty graphite drawings on paper makes invisible correspondences unfold, questioning and extending the normative thinking that is the basis of the notion of universal representation. Each portrait of a domestic plant includes a delicate hatching with footnotes. Under each drawing are sentences written in pencil. These are confessions by the artist, who has added or removed something from the plausibility of the plants. The footnotes allow Di Bernardo to admit the lies we have available through our imagination, and to show how we make them operative in representation. Through the unfolding mechanism of descriptive visualization in relationship to subjective consciousness, Di Bernardo tells a story about the inherent fallacy of any objective representation. Crafting a connection between objectivity and subjectivity, the drawings reverberate with transcendent meaning, reciprocity between the visible and the invisible. Normally, studies present single details, isolated figures, or floating compositions sketched for further development. In choosing to expose a "study for landscape and other animals," Di Bernardo shows us coexisting figures that merge from a white or nonexistent background. This perhaps suggests a damaged society, deprived of any contested landscape. And through figuration, Di Bernardo insinuates not a simple, natural imitation but unexpected combinations. In the four big drawings on paper, semigrotesque, hybrid, and massive figures emerge. As when viewing medieval bestiaries, the spectator is inspired with a subtle feeling of connection between figuration and imagination.

[1] See Alena Alexandrova, "Anarcheologies: On Anarchic Infrastructures," in *The Invisible Seminar*, ed. Brandon Labelle, (Bergen: University of Bergen, Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design, 2017).

at Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples



**JOEL MEYEROWITZ**  
A SENSE OF WONDER - FOTOGRAFIE 1962-2022



Brescia, Museo di Santa Giulia  
25 marzo → 24 agosto 2025

New York City, 1963, ©Joel Meyerowitz

## Dal mondo alle due vetrine di Casa Scaccabarozzi: la mostra di Jason Dodge

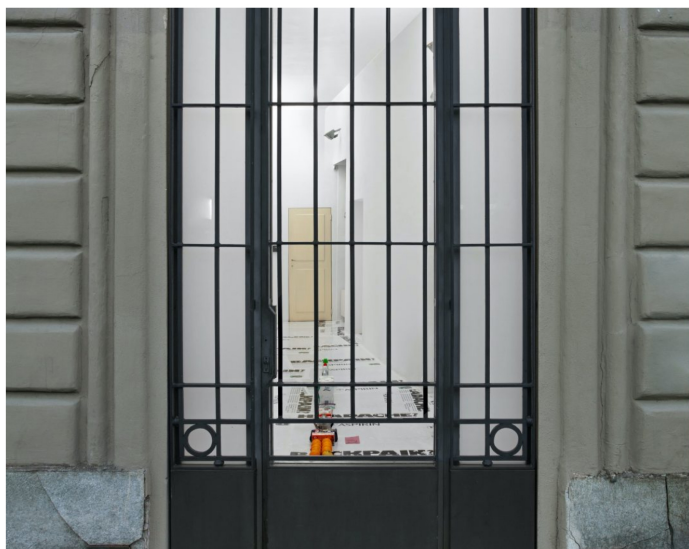
**25**  
NOVEMBRE 2020



**PROGETTI E INIZIATIVE**

di redazione

Esposto a fine ottobre in contemporanea in sei diversi spazi in tutto il mondo, il progetto di Jason Dodge approda nelle due vetrine al piano terra di Casa Scaccabarozzi



Una mostra già visitabile in sei luoghi diversi, da una parte all'altra del mondo, e adesso visibile attraverso una vetrina, anzi due. Precisamente quelle al piano terra di Casa Scaccabarozzi, la famosa Fetta di polenta all'angolo tra corso San Maurizio e via Giulia di Barolo, a Torino, che ospiteranno fino al 12 dicembre 2020 "They lifted me into the sun

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## Un viaggio intorno al mondo e la rilettura di Giorgio Griffa

Gli spazi espositivi che hanno partecipato al progetto sono Galleria Franco Noero, da Torino, Gilles Drouault galerie/multiple, da Parigi, MORE publishers with Gevaert Editions, da Bruxelles, Guimaraes, da Vienna, Akwa Ibom, da Atene, Gern en Regalia, da New York. A ognuno degli spazi, Jason Dodge ha inviato delle istruzioni per l'allestimento, insieme a una lista di oggetti a dir poco eterogenei, tra cui 20 poster pubblicitari della marca Bayer Aspirin, un volantino per il ritrovamento di un animale smarrito, petali di calendula, batterie, forchette, elementi in tessuto e una lista della spesa. La ballerina e coreografa Alix Eynaoudi ha poi composto una partitura da seguire per la composizione di ogni mostra.

Proseguendo la ricerca che Dodge ha da sempre dedicato ai temi della distanza e della percezione, il progetto si basa soprattutto sulla relazione tra persone e sulla interpretazione delle idee, più che sull'improvvisazione. Proprio come se si trattasse dell'operazione di traduzione di un testo da una lingua all'altra: rimanere fedeli al testo, pur con le inevitabili, necessarie e anche preziose "intromissioni" del traduttore, non solo in quanto segno di stile ma anche come peculiarità del linguaggio.

La tappa di Torino, in particolare, è stata interpretata da Giorgio Griffa, che ha riletto le istruzioni attraverso un'installazione che esprime un momento di sintesi tra due poetiche forti e, a tratti, spiazzanti.

La mostra sarà visitabile fino al 12 dicembre 2020 a Casa Scaccabarozzi, iconico edificio torinese, progettato da Alessandro Antonelli nel 1840, dove fino al 2013, peraltro, trovava sede la [galleria di Franco Noero](#). Non sarà consentito l'accesso, a causa delle restrizioni imposte dal lockdown, ma si potrà ugualmente far spaziare il proprio sguardo attraverso le due vetrine al piano terra, secondo una modalità che, in questi tempi così difficili, in cui musei e gallerie sono costretti alla chiusura, ha permesso di riscoprire anche occasioni diverse di fruizione.

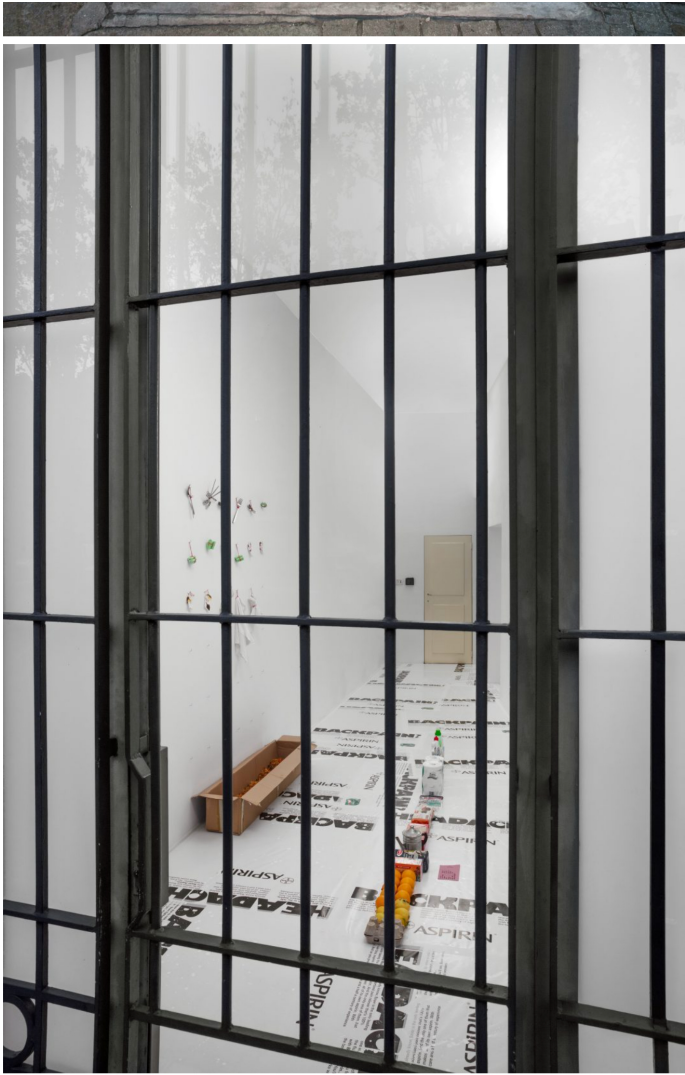
## Jason Dodge a Casa Scaccabarozzi: la fotogallery



# GALERIE ALLEN

empty skull in cinnamon<sup>®</sup> by Jason Dodge, Casa Scaccabarozzi (ground floor), Galleria Franco Noero, Torino. 29 October – 12 November, 2020. Courtesy the artist and Galleria Franco Noero, Torino. Photo credits: Sebastiano Pellion di Persano













**JOEL MEYEROWITZ**  
A SENSE OF WONDER - FOTOGRAFIE 1962-2022



Brescia, Museo di Santa Giulia  
25 marzo → 24 agosto 2025

New York City, 1963, ©Joel Meyerowitz

## di Bernardo, Dodge, Studio for propositional Cinema | Fondazione Morra Greco

21  
FEBBRAIO 2020



**MOSTRE**  
di Emanuele Castellano

**Napoli**

**Fino al 22.II.2020**

Nel cuore di Napoli, la Fondazione Morra Greco propone il confronto tra due artisti molto diversi: Luca Gioacchino di Bernardo, Jason Dodge



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TUTTI I GIORNI  
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Un incrociarsi di tre mostre, che si articolano su altrettanti livelli della rinnovata Fondazione Morra Greco, nel cuore del centro storico di Napoli. Una macchina espositiva che si è messa in moto dopo l'attivazione di varie residenze d'artista, una maniera complessa e sempre più diffusa di far dialogare artisti e territori, privilegiando la specificità. Così gli ambienti espositivi diventano un grande spazio di lettura, proponendo occasioni di approfondimento e confronto sulle dinamiche dell'arte, in un luogo che stavolta mette in scena la ricerca di un giovane artista napoletano come Luca Gioacchino Di Bernardo (Napoli, 1991), accanto a una personalità di grande esperienza come quella dell'americano Jason Dodge (Newton, 1969), che a loro volta entrano in confronto con la il percorso di un gruppo dalle pratiche dirette e inconsuete, come Studio for propositional Cinema.

## Animali e paesaggi, come in uno studio medievale

*Studio per paesaggio e altri animali* è il progetto presentato da Di Bernardo che, tra grafica e illustrazione, racconta una lunga sequenza di piante e altri elementi naturali, osservati e studiati dal terrazzo di casa, in maniera analoga rispetto a quanto è visibile negli studi di botanica medievale, in cui l'attività quotidiana consisteva nel copiare dal vero e aggiungere del testo.

Dal punto di vista puramente formale accade lo stesso, seppur con le dovute differenze di formato, qui piuttosto ampio, sostenuto anche dalle scelte allestitivo. Qui l'artista combatte e si scontra consapevolmente con questa pratica mettendo in costante contraddizione l'apparato grafico con quello testuale. «Dalla sua impotenza verso l'impossibilità di una narrazione reale e dall'urgenza di una narrazione soggettiva, nasce una serie di disegni a carboncino su carta, in cui il disegnatore-soggetto si ritrae come un essere in un divenire interrotto, incompiuto e sfigurato da paranoie e desideri archetipici, che attraverso la stessa auto-rappresentazione tenta di esorcizzare», spiega Alessia Volpe, curatrice della mostra.



**Studio for Propositional Cinema**  
**The Storytellers' Fountain: a tale told by A Gust of Wind in the low and dark rooms, 2019**  
**Installation View at Fondazione Morra Greco, Napoli**  
**On View: The Storytellers' Fountain; narrated by A Gust of Wind, 2019, 6-channel audio installation, 61" and The Storytellers' Fountain; Frame Tales, 2019, hand-cut mirror**

## Fiumi anarchici di oggetti abbandonati

Il lavoro presentato invece da Jason Dodge, dal titolo *as soon as the invented language enters us something else will vibrate in our skin*, prosegue coerentemente con altre sue esposizioni, come l'ultima mostra personale del 2018 per la galleria Franco Noero di Torino. L'enorme mole dell'installazione è costituita da una caotica serie di cose esistenti, detriti, elementi trovati e rielaborati in maniera anarchica, similmente allo scorrere di un fiume o a una colata magmatica, che prosegue al fianco del fruitore lungo tutto il percorso. Tra installazione e atto performativo, l'opera gioca sul dualismo tra presenza e assenza, perdita e abbandono, riflettendo sull'abbondanza di oggetti che ci circondano e con i quali, quotidianamente, ci incrociamo.

## Un dialogo a distanza di tempo e spazio

Piacevolmente estetico è il progetto di Studio for propositional Cinema dal titolo *The storytellers' fountain: a tale told by a gust of wind in the low and dark rooms* basato sull'*Arethusa* di Giovan Battista Basile, testo scritto nel 1618 in onore del principe Caracciolo d'Avellino, che ha dato il nome all'edificio

La narrazione di un mito antico, riletto dalla poesia barocca, si manifesta attraverso forme

...monumenti del canone, amalgamati e scelti con gli auspici dei più esperti e con i  
visitatori, che diventano protagonisti della scena, come in un Idillio contemporaneo.

Mostra visitata il 19 dicembre 2019

*Dal 19 dicembre 2019 al 22 febbraio 2020*

*Luca Gioacchino di Bernardo, Jason Dodge, Studio for propositional Cinema*

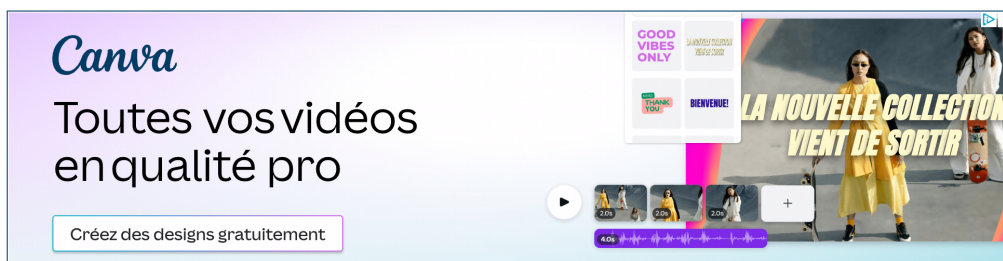
*Fondazione Morra Greco, Palazzo Caracciolo di Avellino*

*Largo Proprio di Avellino*

*80138 Napoli*

*Orari: dal martedì al sabato, dalle 12.00 alle 20.00*

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## Riapre la Fetta di Polenta a Torino per Jason Dodge. Noero tra 6 gallerie coinvolte nel progetto

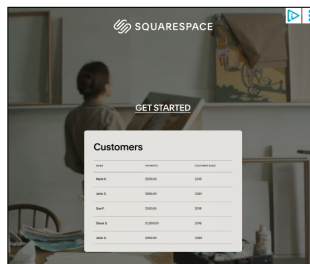
L'artista americano ha ideato una mostra esposta contemporaneamente in 6 spazi nel mondo, dando istruzioni per l'allestimento. Giorgio Griffa le ha interpretate per l'ex galleria di Franco Noero in un edificio storico della città

 di **Claudia Giraud**  02/11/2020

TAG GALLERIE TORINO



Noero in quello stranissimo edificio disegnato nell'800 da **Alessandro Antonelli** a Torino, nel quartiere Vanchiglia in centro. Stiamo parlando di Casa Scaccabarozzi, meglio nota come *Fetta di Polenta* per la sua forma sottile e il colore giallo ocra, che per una volta ancora torna ad essere galleria fino al 12 dicembre 2020, ospitando il nuovo progetto di **Jason Dodge** (Newton, Pennsylvania, 1969), dal titolo *They lifted me into the sun again and packed my skull with cinnamon*. L'artista americano, nel suo consueto stile spiazzante, ha ideato una mostra in edizione di sei esposta, tra l'ultima settimana di ottobre e la prima di novembre, contemporaneamente in altrettanti spazi in giro per il mondo.



Installation view della mostra They lifted me into the sun and packed my empty skull in cinnamon di Jason Dodge, Casa Scaccabarozzi (piano terra), Galleria Franco Noero, Torino

## LE SEDI NEL MONDO

A ciascuna sede – la già citata Galleria Franco Noero (Torino), Gilles Drouault galerie/multiples (Parigi), MORE publishers with Gevaert Editions (Bruxelles), Guimaraes (Vienna), Akwa Ibom (Atene), and Gern en Regalia (New York) – ha fornito una serie di oggetti – tra cui 20 poster pubblicitari della marca Bayer Aspirin, un volantino per il ritrovamento di un animale smarrito, petali di calendula, batterie, forchette, elementi in tessuto e una lista della spesa – e impartito delle istruzioni, delegando un sostituto nell'esecuzione dell'allestimento. Per Torino, ha accettato l'invito **Giorgio Griffa**, il maestro torinese classe 1936, non nuovo a tributi e a generose collaborazioni: due anni fa, in omaggio ad **Alighiero Boetti**, aveva realizzato un intervento permanente sul soffitto dell'atrio di ingresso del [Condominio-Museo ViadellaFucina16](#), donando l'opera a **Kaninchen-Haus**, l'Associazione Culturale dei **Coniglioviola**.

L'ARTICOLO CONTINUA PIÙ SOTTO

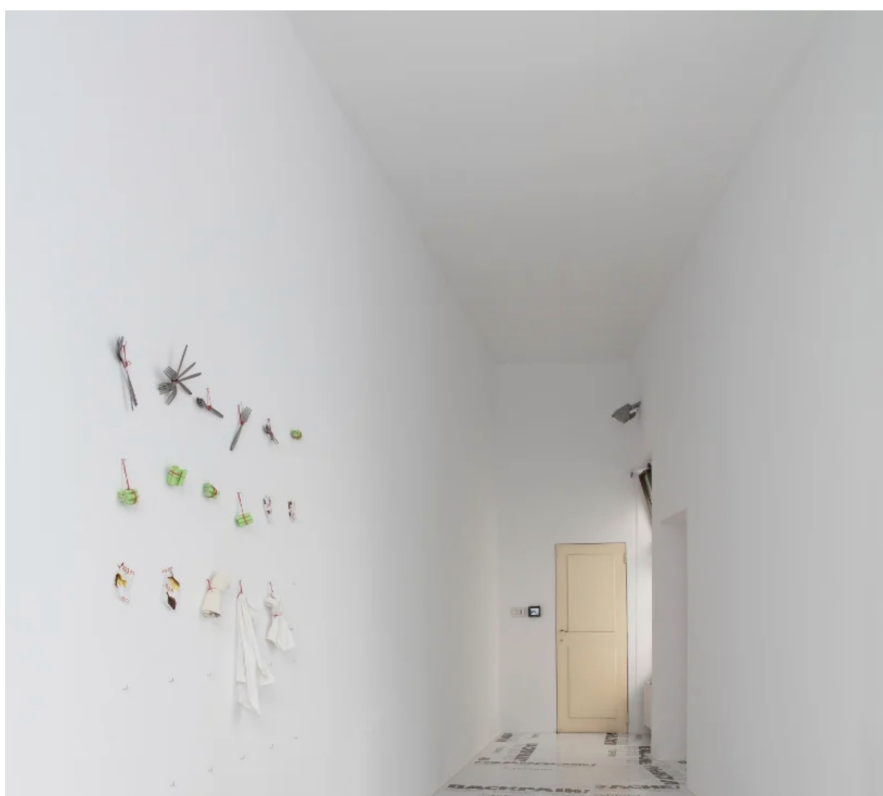


### Render, il bisettimanale sulla rigenerazione urbana

Nuovi progetti, tendenze, strategie virtuose, storie da tutto il mondo, interviste e molto altro.

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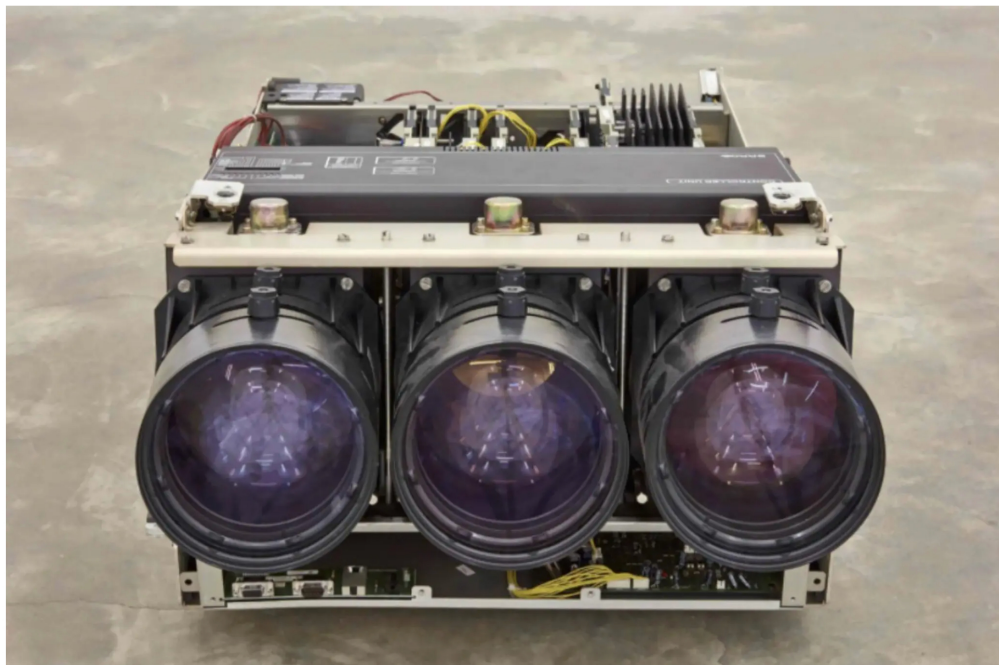
ART ARCHIVES

## Isle of Detritus: Jason Dodge's Poignant Flotsam and Jetsam

*“Three lenses jut from each of four old-school red/green/blue projectors aligned across the floor in a side gallery — howitzers of dead light.”*

by R.C. BAKER

Originally published: July 20, 2018



CASEY KAPLAN

As I meandered around and around Jason Dodge's latest...show?...installation?...environment?... 3-D poem?...notions and emotions ebbed and flowed. The cast-off objects Dodge has scattered throughout Casey Kaplan gallery impart a pervasive melancholy, flotsam and jetsam evoking the strandline between beach and sea. At some point my unconscious summoned [Sergei Rachmaninoff's \*Isle of the Dead\*](#), a symphonic poem from 1908 that begins with slow bass rumbles reminiscent of gentle waves or steady oar strokes. Rachmaninoff — described by Igor Stravinsky as “six feet two inches of Russian

Böcklin's white-shrouded figure standing watch over a coffin in a rowboat as it approaches a small island surrounded by darkly reflective waters. But the mood Dodge achieves and his off-kilter colors do recall the twilight blues, sunset umbers, and crepuscular greens Böcklin used in the five *Isle of the Dead* variations he painted between 1880 and 1886. (The monochrome prints from the paintings offered masses of voluptuous grays and midnight blacks highlighted with sepulchral whites; they were so popular in turn-of-the-century Germany that Vladimir Nabokov wrote in his novel *Despair* that they could be "found in every Berlin home.")

Dodge, who was born in 1969, in Newtown, Pennsylvania, has lived and worked in Berlin since 2003. He is of that wing of sculptors who, over the past century or so, have eschewed creating objects (think of Giacometti clawing at clay as he searched out his attenuated figures, or Richard Serra fabricating space-torquing steel slabs) to instead transform the workaday into singular revelations. Where a contemporary artist such as B. Wurtz might repurpose plastic shopping bags into compelling (and often funny) sculptures that reveal unexpected beauty in our throwaway culture, Dodge aims at a broader aura, a target that, by definition, can never be hit.



CASEY KAPLAN

In his current show, clusters of dead bees have been distributed throughout the four sections of the gallery. A loose-knit, off-white blouse lies atop a washed-out blue bathroom scale, which registers zero weight. Brightly colored electrical wires, cut to uselessness, lie like an ersatz bouquet upon the forlorn garment. More wires are jumbled inside a wicker basket, part of a tableau on the floor that also includes foam-rubber padding mottled in muted colors and a cardboard box containing, among other detritus, a wood-handled knife, dull rock crystals, and yellow aviator shades. There are a few bills and coins squirreled away in a defunct cash register nearby, but what to make of the red thumbtacks, blue batteries, and wishbones also reposing in the segmented drawer? What to make, for that matter, of the show's lowercase title: "hand in hand with the handless"? (There are no titles or material listings for the assemblages on display.) Cheap metal-tube chairs have been set throughout the space, but you wouldn't want to sit on any of them because they are generally missing a leg, and the remaining feet rest on nondescript drinking glasses, while the chairs' backs and armrests are twisted into crippled tangles. In a lyrical variation, heavy claw-footed wooden legs, perhaps from an antique table, lie about, one wrapped in bulging plastic like a Brobdingnagian drumstick. Eventually the show starts to glow with something stronger than melancholy. A determination to persevere arises. Dodge's chairs are nothing if not resolved to just go on, to persist, to exalt in their prosaic levitation.

**At various points in the gallery Dodge has applied a few quick brushstrokes of glossy paint on the matte walls, leaving something like a high-tide line.** A group of heavy-gauge clear plastic pipes, somewhat soiled and lashed together with a salmon-hued strap, stand upright on the floor. At roughly

the three lenses that jut from each of four old-school red/green/blue projectors aligned across the floor in a side gallery — howitzers of dead light. The housings are open to expose circuit boards, cables, fuses, and other electronic entrails. Wires dangle and power cords are absent, ending the machines' mission of casting glowing images onto walls. And yet, with their big dark eyes keeping their own counsel, they seem as determined as the mangled chairs to press on — blind optimists as it were. Even the sightless, Dodge's derelict projectors imply, can help us see.



CASEY KAPLAN

Such perceptive agglomerations can drift into your consciousness after the fact, like a half-forgotten melody. When, a week later, I watched the World Cup final and saw, along with maybe a billion other folks, a Croatian defender accidentally touch the ball with his hand — a transgression that cost his team dearly — I thought of the title of Dodge's show, and of those abject legs scattered across the gallery's concrete floor. Although they seem the antithesis of the explosive grace inherent to world-class soccer players, Dodge's battered limbs achieve a nimble animation, conjuring agile conceptual and aesthetic leaps across the gallery. One mangled chair supports mysterious bulges wrapped in a saffron sheet cinched with dead computer cables; another, beneath a salmon-colored drape, rises on its glass toes like a tri-legged ballerina en pointe.

When protesters ran onto the pitch during the World Cup, I thought, "C'mon, can't I enjoy this great game without a friggin' demonstration?" But of course, the game was being played in Russia, the sinkhole of our current politics. And when I heard later that the demonstrators were members of the Russian dissident rock group Pussy Riot, I thought, "What guts they have! Unbelievable!" They were dressed as police officers, and after they were sentenced to fifteen days in jail (would it have been much worse if the world had not been watching?), they released a statement inspired by the dissident poet Dmitri Aleksandrovich Prigov, which read, in part:

The heavenly policeman, according to Prigov, talks on the two-way with the God Himself. The earthly policeman gets ready to disperse rallies. The heavenly policeman gently touches a flower in a field and enjoys Russian football team victories, while the earthly policeman feels indifferent to Oleg Sentsov's hunger strike. The heavenly policeman rises as an example of the nationhood, the earthly policeman hurts everyone.

The ambience Dodge achieves by reanimating mundane objects can send the mind wandering through exactly those poetical realms between heaven and earth, territory once traversed by the poet painter William Blake. In fact, since 2012, through his "Fivehundred places" project, Dodge has published a wide range of poets, stating, "I try to deal with the space of the book and the pages in a way that poems are on them as things in a space, even sometimes shifting the orientation of the page as to not interfere with line breaks as they are written." This might also be a brief for one of his exhibitions, where

# Flash Art

Review / January 13, 2015

## Raimundas Malašauskas & Jason Dodge UTDT / Buenos Aires



*"Tomorrow night i walked to a dark black star" installation view at Universidad Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires (2014) Courtesy of the Artists and UTDT. Photography*

As evidence of an ongoing conversation between the curator and the artist, Raimundas Malašauskas invited Jason Dodge to join him in conceiving a project for the art department of the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires. Within this university context, one might almost think of the show, titled "Tomorrow Night I Walked to a Dark Star," as a classroom experiment.

Close to the exhibition space within the campus there's a neuroscience lab featuring an environmental chamber separated from exterior electromagnetic fields; strict isolation protocols must be followed. Similarly, the show consists of a set of rules, a display etiquette not to be disrupted or interfered with. Three times a day, an assistant changes the lights — from white to amber and vice versa — mounted on a scaffold that is always present, only changing its position. An arcade machine with a dance platform greets the viewer at the entrance. The show also features a performance piece by Bruce Nauman — a hired actor walks the room as if the ceiling were five feet high, with the public standing outside — along with an arrangement of textured patterns on each wall and a phrase by poet Alfred Starr Hamilton, which gives the show its title and undergoes random permutations by means of an algorithm designed by Robert Pearson, with results displayed on a pile of sheets.

These elements alter endlessly by chance. The room has been tested, the exhibition space submitted to noise analysis. Beyond the need to display any actual content, everything is overdesigned and at the same time dissociated, and the result is akin to a master class in curatorial inventiveness — as if the wheel of exhibition making could be reinvented every time it is turned. One of the tenets of contemporary art — that is, the continual postponement of meaning — is thus rephrased in terms of interrogation techniques: art experienced in circumstances of sensory deprivation.

*by Claudio Iglesias*

## Jason Dodge Creates Compelling Environments For Those With Enough Patience

By R. C. Baker  
February 5, 2014



Exhibition view, *We are the meeting.*, 2014. Photo: Jean Vong Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York.

"I am happy to answer any more questions. I never intend specific meaning, so my answers may seem circular. You are the conduit for the meaning. Best, Jason."

Well, um . . . thanks.

Perhaps, as a critic, I should welcome such *carte blanche* from an artist who answered by e-mail — indeed, in a rather circular fashion — a few questions about his current show. (Dodge, born in Pennsylvania in 1969, lives in Berlin.)

And questions are in order when the first thing you notice in the gallery's entrance area is what looks to be a forgotten bag of groceries. Then you see that same bag noted on the exhibition list as *The beginning and the end*. (A second grocery bag resides in the last gallery.)

There's no doubt that food, along with air, are staples of beginning, then sustaining, life. And somehow, with just a smattering of objects in the gallery's otherwise empty spaces, Dodge makes such quotidian fundamentals radiant.

Take, for example, a large wicker basket woven by a blind man in Germany and set out on the floor. Dodge told me that his question to the craftsman was, "in the mind's eye how big of a basket could you make?" For the exhibition, Dodge has attached a brightly burning spotlight low on the wall, while another, bolted to the empty basket, is turned off but glows nonetheless, because the two bulbs face each other in a gentle kiss.

This luminous embrace foretells its own demise, however. Should the basket meet its destiny and be filled with something weighty — a curled-up body would fit nicely — the pressure pushing at its flexible sides could easily cause the caressing bulbs to shatter. This possibility creates a palpable awareness of the air in the basket and the fragile intensity of the light, an awareness also kindled in the rear gallery, where unlit florescent tubes are scattered on the floor, some wrapped in rose-colored gels. Throughout each day, the gallery's staff systematically switches out the overhead white and rose lights, gradually changing the color of the space. During our visit the light was perhaps three-quarters rose, the walls at the divide seemingly spray-painted pink over white. After our eyes absorbed the hue for a bit, the gray floors and white walls of the adjoining galleries appeared to take on a greenish cast, creating a sort of walk-in Josef Albers color study.

An electrical cord runs horizontally a little above head level along the walls of these front rooms, like the rim of a vast bowl. This oddly delineated volume calls out in turn to the latent expansiveness of the basket's sides and, by extension, the expansiveness inherent to art, which is always reconnoitering the frontiers of being.

In some corners, Dodge has scattered pine needles and other sweepings from the holidays in a surpassingly ephemeral piece titled *We carry our sleeping children*. This gentle phrase might conjure Christmas Eve doting; considering the thin metal tube filled with poison hemlock seeds that pokes through walls and runs along the middle of the floor, those words could also imply tragedy. A yellow pillow titled *The mayor is sleeping*. The mayor of Nuremberg is sleeping lies on the floor next to a prone metal chimney. That title charges this pairing with ghastly associations, Nuremberg being the spiritual seat of Nazism — although its current mayor, a progressive social democrat, represents the antithesis of Germany's ashen past. Dodge's deft visual chops create a compelling environment that rewards the patient viewer with intimations of delight, woe, and uneasiness — to pluck rather bluntly from the varied emotions his juxtapositions arouse. His titles engender an even broader nimbus of history, art theory, and speculation.

One can easily follow various connections between objects to far-flung conclusions. Here's one rabbit hole to dive into: Combine the poison with the precariously positioned light bulbs, the chimney, and Nuremberg, and it might occur to you that hemlock is an ancient method of choosing the exact time of one's demise, a bit of control in a chaotic, sometimes savage world. Those seemingly abandoned groceries might bring forth a vision of last meals, followed by a flash on da Vinci's *Last Supper*, an image that powerfully transmits its drama of death foretold, despite centuries of erratic conservation that have left it faded and abraded.

Similar to that tale's ultimate resolution, Dodge achieves something of a resurrection for his objects: Enigmatic grace emanating from utilitarian dross.

Or not. Go judge for yourself. If I am the conduit of meaning, then so, too, are you.

# frieze

## Always in the Present



*The mayor is sleeping. A pillow that has only been slept on by the mayor of Nuremberg*

*Dominikus Müller* discusses  
the role of words and objects in the  
work of **Jason Dodge**



“Jason Dodge”, 2012-13, installation view at Kunstverein Nuremberg

It all starts with an object. Lying on the floor of the exhibition space close to the wall, seemingly abandoned by someone who has just left the room, is a bundle of folded cloth, carefully tied up with white string. The coarse fabric, a distinctive marbled grey, looks expensive and hand-woven. Then I read the title: In Transylvania Zsuzsanna Sipos wove woolen yarn and hemp the colour of a storm at night and the length from the earth to above the weather. Suddenly, I see this object differently.

In Transylvania ... perfectly embodies Jason Dodge's work of the past decade: ready-mades or specifically commissioned quotidian objects, whose titles give them an added dimension. The way titles and additional information frame our experience of the objects we see matters a great deal to Dodge. He recently decided to stop providing dates for his works (although earlier work may still appear with dates in existing writing in print or online). 'In my mind,' Dodge explained to me, 'the nature of things is that they are always in the present.'<sup>1</sup>

So, while looking at this bundle of fabric, I start thinking about the weaver who made it, a woman named Zsuzsanna Sipos, who apparently lives in the remote Romanian region of Transylvania – a place I have never been to and will probably never visit. I imagine the amazement she must have felt at being assigned such a curious task by a Berlin-based artist: to weave a piece of fabric using yarn the colour of a night storm long enough to reach from the ground to 'above the weather', where no clouds ever hide the sun. I contemplate the logistics behind creating such an item and, gradually, this simple piece of fabric expands to bridge multiple distances – night and day, storm and sun, Transylvania, Berlin and the Kunstverein Nuremberg, where this work was on show in 2013. All of these places are real, but right now they exist only in my imagination: a profusion of associations erupting from a small bundle of cloth.

Despite the literalness of Dodge's titles, it's easy to get carried away with language when looking at his work: expressive metaphors come naturally; melancholy and longing take over. The artist's spare, highly effective pairings of objects and titles, of things with words, form a precisely assembled machine of meaning – or, at the risk of sounding pretentious, a dense text-object-haiku – minimal in its means, but maximal in effect.

Over the last decade, Dodge has created a body of work that appears and re-appears in various forms in multiple exhibition



*Changing the lights. From rose light to white light, from white light to rose light, by hand, over and over*

contexts, like a meandering score with recurring motifs or, rather, an alphabet that can be used to form new words and sentences in each different scenario. Another example: simple copper pipes, seemingly connected to the building's water supply, run through the gallery, prompting the unsettling sensation that the space could be flooded by a simple turn of a tap. The title: *Your death, sub-marine. copper pipes connected to water.* Apparently, the pipes might even contain hemlock. The

same is true for various wind instruments, such as *Poison hemlock* in a tenor flute. The contents of other works, however, are more auspicious: some unnervingly silent 'sleeping' owls, lying on battered cartons in the corners of the exhibition room, have had gemstones hidden in them by a taxidermist (Rubies inside of an owl and Emeralds inside of an owl).

At other times, Dodge offers us almost nothing at all: small gestures, ephemeral residues, not so much the presence of an object but its absence. In such works, the notion of possibility looms large. For his 2012–13 exhibition at Kunstverein Nuremberg, the artist simply removed a radiator (*The disappearance of Katherine Bissell*). Likewise, in Dodge's first institutional show in the us, *'What We Have Done'* (2013–14), at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle, he presented *The living*, a room with nothing in it except a few traces of dirt and hay, and a faintly lingering animal smell. 'Without an audience, several animals were brought into a room for some time and then returned to where they live,' reads the description in the show's catalogue. Yet, in viewing these works, we are made aware only that something appears to have been removed from the space: our common sense must help us to decipher what has taken place.

For his permanent installation at the Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia, Dodge installed a simple cedarwood double door, in the tower of a former power plant adjacent to the collection's premises. Up in the tower, he simply left open a window (A permanently open window). Included in the Kunstverein Nuremberg show, two doors consists of a similar wooden double door built into an existing door frame. 'For me, a work has to function as a membrane or a threshold,' says Dodge. 'You come through it and are somewhere else.'<sup>2</sup> Open windows and doors seem perfectly to encapsulate this notion.

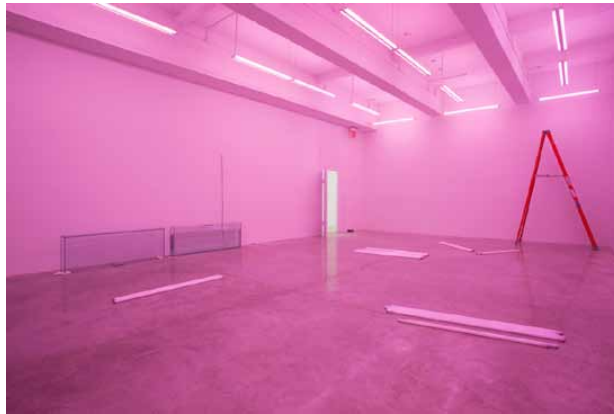
Many of Dodge's works have a touch of the uncanny about them, in Sigmund Freud's sense of *Unheimlichkeit*, which literally translates as 'the becoming strange of one's own home', implying the establishing of a sense of distance between ourselves and our immediate surroundings. Likewise, Dodge estranges the viewer from the object, alienating the familiar and everyday by claiming, for instance, that there is poison inside a copper pipe. The uncanny is not something supernatural or ghostly, he suggests: it is the world and everything in it – objects, people, animals.

# BOMB

January 16, 2014

ART  
JASON DODGE AND CAROLINE KNOX

“Poems are practical.” Jason Dodge and Caroline Knox talk about art, poetry, and reading.



Jason Dodge, White to rose light, rose to white light over and over.. All photos courtesy of Casey Kaplan and Jason Dodge.  
Photo credit: Jean Vong.

*I will meet Caroline Knox for the first time face to face on Saturday, but I have known her somehow over the years through her work. A friend was looking at the covers of the new 500 Places volumes, and instead of opening a book he asked, “What are Caroline Knox’s poems like?” and I thought of her book Quaker Guns, and how a Quaker and a gun contradict each other until it is a log covered in tar that only looks like a cannon, and then I thought, Yes! That describes her work somehow. Then I remembered her poem “Flemish,” which is set up like a postcard. There are two Flemish paintings, a recipe for strawberries, an inventory of the items in the two paintings, and the simple phrase “Oh Flanders! A / Benelux country, a Low Country.”*

I truly hope everyone has a chance to read Caroline Knox’s poems. It was a thrill for me to be able to chat with her for this piece.

— Jason Dodge

Caroline Knox What in your work of art and sculpture turned you to publishing and to publishing poets, rather than to another art, like music or cooking? And what directed you toward the poets once you started on this?

Jason Dodge My relationship to literature has been, you could say, single-minded. Because I don’t really have the ability to read so much. I think this is the case for many artists, that a lot of us found visual arts because they were something that gave permission to a different kind of brain. While my disbelief cannot be suspended by a novel, I can handle the intensity and the complexity. So, poetry has been my sort of singular relationship to literature for a long time.

CK That’s very nice. It’s very cogent.

JD And I just noticed that in my own working and thinking, that I was getting my greatest inspiration from reading poetry. Poems that are being written now. And that was just so exciting for me to finally stumble across a way to start to think about how can I try to get people, other people, whose artwork I love so much, to read some of the poetry that I love so much.

CK Also, poems are practical, and workable. I think that's really part of why I never wanted to write a short story or a novel; because I was busy being thrown into the parameters of whatever poem I was working on at the time. What you said makes a lot of sense to me.

JD Well, one of the things that drew me to your work is something that I don't know if I necessarily have the words to describe; it's the relation to poetry or to literature in a good solid way. One of the things that really drew me to your writing was a kind of a detail and a distance, a placement, an atmosphere, a distraction, ways in which you use language to somehow locate or to dislocate me as I was reading it.

CK Thank you!

JD Just that idea of the incredible detail of the title. Just taking the title and looking at it in a different way, and then talking about your daughter knowing how to make the strawberries levitate. And then all of a sudden you're back in Flanders, the lowlands, and just the way in which there's a kind of...it's not a distance in the same vision, and a closeness in the same vision. It's a distance with a certain flatness at times and at other times a kind of connectedness, and a detail with a kind of intimacy or also a kind of flatness. And I love that those are the sort of moments in which I'm trying to find out, in a sense, where I am. Like if there are poems of yours where I feel like I'm having a conversation, and poems of yours where I feel like I'm playing a game. And I love that feeling.

CK I would hope that people would feel that way inside of each poem, in slightly different ways. I definitely wanted all those objects and elements to be in "Flemish" together. Because some of them are just sort of throwaway, and these painters from Flanders are really quite wonderful, but they have such screwball compositions!

And my daughter and my sister, those are all real quotes. "Hey, listen to me." "No, listen to me." I think it's quite, well, human comedy, you know. And I like to include together in a poem, as much as I possibly can, things that don't belong there, and make a kind of context for them. And you know, have fanciness right next to imbecility. And have prosaic next to something sublime. And I also like to have a lot of objects in my poems. So, I'm very interested in the process of making a poem, and not interested at all in making an idea clear to the reader.

JD I think that is another point in which I identify with you very much. It is the age-old question of what somebody's objective is, and how that always seems to me as if one doesn't get to decide that.

CK Why would you want to? But people do, sometimes.

JD They do! My grandfather, who I love very much, said to me when I was quite young something that stays with me, and just often repeats itself in my mind, which is that it's not what something means, it's the way something means.

CK What a wonderful thing to leave with your grandchild.

JD It has guided me in so many different ways

CK It's permission, and generous permission, to find things out.

JD One of the things I'm interested in is how you would describe your reading life. When I read your poems I get the sense of peering into a bookshelf filled with just a million different things that I never could guess.

CK Well, yes, and I read quite a few poets. I've tried to read a lot of the 500 Places poets. They're friends, and I have always read them. And going back, I'm an Auden-Stevens person, and a New York School of Poetry person, in order to get refreshed about the inductiveness of making stuff, and putting things into poetry that haven't been there yet. Because all of those poets tried to do that, and did do it. And Kenneth Koch said, "We didn't see any reason to avoid humor." That was one way to put it.

I try to include word games. And I try to include history, and I'm interested in having other periods of English in my English. And also demotic things like Valley Girl talk. Recently I was listening to somebody on the subway. She

said, “We went to the mall, we went to sports bar and that.” What does “and that” mean? It means etcetera to you and me, but that’s how she said it: “and that.” And it meant something, it was very meaningful to her. And so I kept it, and made it be in a poem. And that’s another local kind of English that I love to catch elements of.

JD But sometimes I also get a sense, in your book, of technical writing, writing that maybe isn’t written with the intention of being looked at with the scrutiny that one would look at a novel, or a piece of good non-fiction, or even poetry. Do you read things that come from other kinds of sources?

CK I like to take technical jargon and use it in a sense that it isn’t meant to be, but I’m not much of a techy person. It would have been fun to use a lot, a lot more technical language, like from IT, and be able to use it in poetry, along with other things. Are you good at those things?

JD No, not even remotely.



Jason Dodge, What We Keep Doing to Ourselves

CK It’s a mystery! I think mystery in all of art is a sacramental, don’t you?

JD I do. And it’s something that I struggle with. I think it’s a curious moment in visual arts, because more people are making art work now than ever before in history. And more artists are living from their art than ever before.

CK Isn’t that fabulous?

JD It is. It’s fabulous and fascinating, and sometimes I also feel as if the role that art is expected to serve in some people’s minds is not a role that engages me at all. And that it would be something that would be, well, something pleasing or entertaining or decorative or useful, in a way that I always thought of other things as being useful. Or if I think of how I use things, or how my family and I lived with things at home, they’re very different —

CK Like a can opener.

JD Yeah. Like, a can-opener can be celebrated as just the right can opener, or an interesting can opener, or a funny can opener, but it’s not a work of art, unless that decision has been made. But I’m hoping that art has the ability to diversify itself to such an extreme that film can. You wouldn’t look at a film about an Iranian boy that collects crushed cans on the side of the road the same way that you would look at the most recent blockbuster that you can also watch in 3D. But, they’re both films. I’m hoping that art goes into this direction of being something which can be seen and consumed in many different ways, and have a role in different people’s lives. One of the things I love about poetry and what I think I’m interested in about this press, is that I know that many of the people who have these books — or who have them but haven’t read them yet — may be reading poetry for the first time, but are very well established in their minds and read other very complex things besides poetry. They are a ripe audience for poetry, but poetry is coming into their homes as a sort of mini Trojan horse, whereas something like *The New Yorker* is kind of a big Trojan horse of poetry. It’s bringing poetry into so many peoples’ homes. Read or unread, they’re still there, and I love that.

CK Some of the poets were your friends already, right?

JD Well, Matthew and Michael Dickman I got to know because I sort of tracked them down just before Michael’s first book came out, and after Matthew’s first book was published. By a series of coincidences, my friend Alex



Jason Dodge, Electric.

was going to Portland to work with a band there, right when The New Yorker did a profile of them, and I said, “See, Alex!

They’re real poets. You can go find them for me, because I can’t find them because they don’t work for a university so I can’t find their emails.” And so he went and it turned out that Matthew was making the sandwiches that the band was eating, at the local Whole Foods. That’s how we got in touch and just naturally fell into a conversation that takes many forms, considering we live on opposite sides of the planet. But we’ve had plenty of opportunities to spend lots of time together recently, which has been great.

CK I’m glad that those Dickman brothers are having such a lot of attention.

JD Well, they’re great advocates of poetry. I mean, they’re really great people to bring poetry to people who have never read poetry.

And they have real passion for what they’re doing. It’s their whole life. Which is what’s exciting for me, because they’re really the first poets that I’ve gotten to know well. Most of the people I contact for the press are people who I just contact in the same way that I wrote to you. I find the email address some way, and just say, “I really like what you’re doing, would you be interested in doing something in a different context?”

Jason Dodge’s current exhibition, “We Are the Meeting,” is on view at Casey Kaplan Gallery in New York through February 22.

Caroline Knox’s eighth book, *Flemish*, appeared from Wave Books in 2013. Her work has been in *American Scholar*, *A Public Space*, *Boston Review*, *Harvard*, *New Republic*, *Paris Review*, *Yale Review*, *Poetry*, and elsewhere.

# Art Review:

## Previewed

*Jason Dodge*

Casey Kaplan, New York

9 January - 22 February

Jason Dodge inveigles unassuming objects into telling commodious stories. His first permanent installation, *A Permanently Open Window* (2013, see website for access times), at Collezione Maramotti in Italy's Reggio Emilia, for example, involves an open window in a former electrical factory, a building that one can enter when given a key, and a semisecret sculpture inside: shenanigans which, as Dodge told *Artforum* recently, reflect his interest in 'the notion of *how* something means something as opposed to *what* something means'. Titling helps: in the bookish artist's show at the University of Washington's Henry gallery (on view until 26 January), one work is entitled *Pillows That Have Only Been Slept on by Ornithologists* (2013; other 'subjects' in the series include doctors, acrobats and mayors). Not that these descriptions convey

the poetics, quietude and clarity of his work, its estrangement of how something looks and what's secreted within it; a 2011 blue tapestry folded like a blanket, for example, was woven from string 'equalling the distance from the earth to above the weather'. Now his work is at Casey Kaplan: don't sleep on it.

*Martin Herbert*



10 Jason Dodge, *Carrier*. Photo: Jean Vong.  
Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York

# ARTFORUM



Jason Dodge, *Electric*, n.d. Installation view.

Jason Dodge  
CASEY KAPLAN

Critics of Jason Dodge's sparse exhibitions over the past decade have frequently cited and relied upon the "narratives" and "poetry" bodied forth by his unassuming, enigmatically undated objects. Yet these oft-repeated terms have seemed increasingly facile in the face of his expansive output, with its sometimes radical testing of belief, fictions, and facts. Of the works in his recent New York show, take, for example, *The mayor is sleeping. The mayor of Nuremberg is sleeping.*, a pillow the artist asserts has been slept on only by the mayor of Nuremberg. This backstory is fanciful, yes, but serves as more than just a ploy to pique the viewer's attention.

This show "We are the meeting." partially coincided with "What we have done.," the artist's first comprehensive exhibition in North America at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle. There, visitors could have gleaned from the accompanying checklist or catalogue that the random bits of hay and grass and the lingering barnyard smell in a spacious gallery were left over from several animals that had briefly occupied the space without an audience (*The living*), or that the plastic-wrapped bed sheets on the floor in another room were rotated weekly by a hotel linen service (*Anyone*). For this sister show in New York, Dodge revised a work from the Henry, *Two doors, two doors.*, a long wall with a duo of doorways, each of which holds two doors (one opening in, one opening out). At Casey Kaplan, under the title *Passages*, the piece was pared back to a single, double-doored entry. A different sculpture, *Poison hemlock through three rooms.*, a version of which debuted at New York's Marianne Boesky Gallery in January 2013, features a brass pipe running across the floor that was (ostensibly) filled with the infamous Socrates-killing substance. The pipe-exceedingly thin, almost like a line-echoed *Electric*, an electrical wire that hugged the walls of the first gallery, wrapped around the second room, and terminated there abruptly, as if it had been cut. A bit of stripped copper wire was exposed at the break-it seemed to augur danger. Around the corner in the third and final gallery, the wire's plug was pushed through a hole in the wall and submerged in an aquarium full of water.

On the afternoon of January 11, Dodge invited six poets (Michael Dickman, Caroline Knox, Dorothea Lasky, Anna McDonald, M. A. Vizsolyi, and Susan Wheeler) to read their works in his show. The artist's respect for these individuals-he referred to them as being like "childhood heroes"-has led him to establish *Fivehundred Places*, a small press that seeks to encourage the appreciation of poetry within the art world. As the poets recited their pieces, the material, temporal, and spatial disparities between the two arts were emphasized.

*Fivehundred Places* has already printed several chapbooks. Dodge writes, "[W]ith a single printing of 500 copies, each book will find itself in one of 500 places." This concentration on place was reinforced throughout the Kaplan show as well-particularly in the brass tubes and electric wiring in the galleries that were so typical and yet so unnoticed; the woody smell, emanating from an unspecified place or object, that permeated the galleries; the pillow as the alleged site of a famed figure's sleep; and the portal-like doors. Particularly with the last, Dodge focused the viewer's attention on distinct yet adjacent places, on what may seem related but are actually unlike, in ways that recall how his work negotiates the kinship and discrepancies between stanza and sculpture.

-Lauren O'Neill-Butler

# Art in America

## Jason Dodge's Poetic Conceptualism

by **Brienne Walsh**



To the uninitiated, Jason Dodge's exhibition "We Are the Meeting," opening today at New York's Casey Kaplan Gallery, might appear to be a collection of unconnected, lost objects. At the door is a paper bag full of organic groceries. As the visitor walks into the gallery she sees a lightning rod and a white chimney lying alongside each other; an electrical cable whose plug lies in an aquarium full of water; and a brass shaft running along the floor and containing poisonous hemlock seeds. There's also an installation of rose and white fluorescent lights that are constantly being changed out by the gallery staff, so that the room's illumination frequently changes color.

But once the Pennsylvania-born, Berlin-based Dodge himself begins to explain the work, the logic behind the exhibition (through Feb. 22) begins to reveal itself. "It has to do with what we live with," Dodge told A.i.A.,

"what is in the landscape of things that are made by people."

The bag of groceries is thus not just a bag of groceries—rather, Dodge, 44, explained, it is actual food we choose to put in our bodies as well as a symbol of our interconnectedness with the world. Identical mobile phones with SIM cards that Dodge had his friends collect from various locations to which they traveled—Mongolia, Georgia, Israel and Brazil—also highlight the way that the vastness of the world is compressed in the products we consume.

The title of each work is descriptive—North: A chimney points north, for example, and The Mayor is Sleeping: A pillow that has only been slept on by the mayor of Nuremberg. They tell the viewer exactly what the object is, and nothing more. "The work being passive is very important to me," Dodge explained. "I see the people who come to the work as conduits rather than receivers."

Many people may come into the exhibition and not get it. But a few will see, for example, the work made up of a stick of deodorant and a pile of tissues, and find their own meaning. For Dodge, the work arouses melancholy. "It's about the idea that we're covering up sweat, preventing it from happening," he said. But he doesn't expect others to see that in the work. "There's far more potential in not saying what it's about," he says.

Among the artists of his generation, Dodge most identifies with poets, which is part of the reason why he recently began fivehundredplaces, a printing press for poetry books by the likes of Carl Phillips and Matthew Dickman. Although he himself didn't draw the comparison between his work and poetry, there are similarities between the exhibition and a poem. The latter can be a brief set of four or five lines that a reader comes upon in a moment, and feels inexplicably connected to. Dodge hopes that certain viewers will have a similar experience with his work. "To be an artist, you have to say something no one else can say in the way you're saying it," he explains. "That's the part you can't learn."

November 6,



ROMANTIC EMPTINESS Newsprint, clean linen, livestock detritus, and pillows.

## An Acrobat's Pillow The Strict Art of What's Not There

by Jen Graves

Down low in the museum in a high-ceilinged room with pretty wood floors, the overhead lights have gone a little green. The room is nearly empty. It's the largest in the Henry Art Gallery, built for long vistas and big sculptures that would bust the walls of lesser rooms, but right now, it looks like a school gymnasium put to some nebulous after-hours use. Four enormous rolls of industrial newsprint sit on the floor. Also on the floor: five tightly plastic-wrapped piles of folded white towels, two purple pillows, two light-blue pillows. One wall has two doors. Another wall is studded with three lightbulbs. That's all, and in no way all.

There's a handout with a map at the entrance containing necessary words. About the color-coded pillows, it says, "Pillows that have only been slept on by acrobats" (purple) and "Pillows that have only been slept on by Ornithologists" (light-blue). The piles of plastic-wrapped towels are titled *Anyone*. Their medium is "Bed linen in weekly rotation by a linen service." They sit unopened here, in between uses future and past. How clean are clean towels? The handout is important because it embodies the idea that you must "take the word of" the artist, Jason Dodge; he uses the medium of language to fill in what's

to the gallery every few days and take the old piles back to be used. The rolls of newsprint are borrowed from the *Seattle Times*, and one by one, over the duration of the art show, each roll will be taken back to the factory to become newspapers, leaving empty spots in the gallery.

Dodge arranged all this by asking acrobats, ornithologists, a local hotel, and the *Seattle Times* to play along. One imagines these conversations were interesting. Another conversation: Dodge arranged for a local farm to bring animals into the Henry for a residency. You won't see them—nobody did, except those directly involved, and no photos were taken. When the animals left, the museum removed their bio-matter (you cannot just have shit sitting out in an art museum), but kept their scuff marks and bits of straw and dirt all across the floor. There's an idyllic, romantic emptiness here, with a certain faint, untraceable scent: one way to represent what happens when artless living creatures get their turn in the frame of art. Museums and galleries can be cold and disappointing places.

Dodge's requirements can be strict: Even a catnap by someone other than the ornithologist—her husband, mistaking one pillow in their bed for another, one imagines—and that pillow is null and void. Are acrobats or ornithologists more likely to dream of flying? These unspoken conversations are part of the art, too, the ones that happened as people were drying themselves off in hotel rooms or drivers were hauling newsprint back toward the factory, or every draft of the stories that appeared in those papers, or the photographs that didn't run but that the photographer wished had. The objects in the galleries are parts of stories shared by the artist, the subject, the sculptor, and you, imagining what's happening the way you might envision your own version of the specific world of any given novel. The future itself assembles, written down in black and white and photographed, rising up on the surfaces of these big blank rolls and going out into ears and mouths and the crawl spaces of new thoughts. All these spoken and unspoken conversations rise up around the objects in great clouds of narrative.

Dodge calls the newspaper piece *What we have done.*, and that's also the title of the whole museum exhibition: *Jason Dodge: What we have done*. The handout refers to this as "the artist's first comprehensive exhibition in North America." Dodge is American, born in 1969 in Newton, Pennsylvania, now living in Berlin. Comprehensive is a funny word in Dodgeworld. There are eight pieces here, not including several shown previously in Seattle (at Western Bridge). If *What we have done.* is "comprehensive," it's only in the way that any of Dodge's sculptures is comprehensive—as a complete and specific simple object that cannot be exchanged with any other, but imaginatively unbounded, with so many parts present but unseen, like the way the weight of a head changes the shape of a pillow over time. The phrase *What we have done.* itself is a demonstration of the condition: Styled with a period, it comes across as a finished thought in the past tense, referring to something that already exists, a closed set. But "what we have done" grows every moment, and who could remember all that they've done, and who could know all *we've* done? We don't even know each other.

*What we have done.* has an implied twin phrase, the more common "what have we done." One sounds accomplished, the other despairing. The exhibition is also divided in two: one section containing *The living* (the leavings of the animals), and the other section the pillows, towels, and newsprint rolls. There's a wall between the two sides, with two doors, and each door is actually two doors—you open one to find yourself face-to-face with the back of another door, so each time you go through, the act of going out a door switches you instead into going in one. Furthering the doublemania, the doors turn out to be slightly different sizes, a fact not at first apparent, which results in another mental twinning: what something actually looks like, and what you think it looks like. That paragraph was more fun to write (and, one hopes, to read) than the art was to interact with in the gallery.

There are only two other pieces, made of lightbulbs and a bell. They hang on a wall at the exhibition's midpoint, casting light on both sides. One is two bulbs facing each other very close in, forming a little witticism, a perfect visual phrase. The other is *A signal bell tuned to C inside a wall, marked by lights*. Yes, the bell is really in there. No, you cannot hear it.

# Henry Art Gallery

## Jason Dodge: What We Have Done

OCTOBER 19 - JANUARY 26  
STROUM GALLERY

Entering a Jason Dodge exhibition a viewer may be struck by its seeming emptiness and deceived by its apparent simplicity. The artist works by placing collections of objects - some familiar, others not - in the galleries to create broad associations between them, often introducing us to finished, truncated, or open-ended narratives via descriptive titles that can sometimes be a few lines long. Some recount how the works were made, others suggest what they could be or even add a sense of impending danger with troubling information that declares them unfinished as a playful challenge for the viewer to ponder. In every case, the succinct text relates to the piece itself, but extends far beyond it, igniting our imagination, interpretive skills, and heightening our sense of presence and responsibility in front of art.

Dodge's sculptures are made in "performative" ways and are almost always discrete to the point of being—at times – imperceptible. These artworks intently mark their location and reveal meaning, not by declaring loudly or literally their objecthood, but by transmitting bits of information to the viewer, activating our cognitive skills, and awakening our senses.

The artist's interest in literature and, in particular, poetry informs his practice. Dodge is interested in and hyper-aware of the architectural context and the physical conditions of the gallery spaces where he shows, treating them similarly to a blank sheet of paper that awaits information. He is also deeply cognizant that his works as units are like words that hold numerous meanings and that fit together in different arrangements can form ambiguous sentences that in turn create experiences, which can profoundly reconfigure a site. Dodge's aim is always to illicit a personal and emotional experience that is born out of his ability to stretch time and also his appreciation and understanding of the poetic and real potential of space.

What We Have Done, the artist's first comprehensive exhibition in North America, will create an experiential journey that will include both recent and new work. A publication will be produced in conjunction with the project.



Jason Dodge, *Copper pipes connected to the water supply, your dear, sub-marine*, Collection William and Ruth True

Jason Dodge was born in 1969 in Newtown, Pennsylvania, and lives and works in Berlin, Germany. Recently he has had solo shows at the Lenton Museum, in Linz Austria, the Albrecht Durrer Gesselschaft/Kunstverein Nurnberg, CAC Vilnius, Lithuania, the Hannover Kunstverein and the American Academy, Rome, Italy. He has participated in La triennale, at the Palais de Tokyo, curated by Okwui Enwezor, The 2013 Bienal do Mercosul, in Porto Alegre Brazil, the 2013 Biennale de Lyon, and the 2013 Venice Biennale curated by Massimiliano Gioni. In the United States he has had a solo exhibition at the Orange County Museum in 2004 and has been part of group exhibitions at the Walker Art Center, the MCA Chicago, MOCAD, Detroit, and Western Bridge in Seattle.

Jason Dodge: What We Have Done is curated by Luis Croquer, deputy director of art and education. The exhibition is made possible with the generosity of our Presenting Sponsor, the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. Funding is also provided through gifts made to the Henry Now Campaign by the Barton Family Foundation in memory of Irving Marcus; Cathy and Michael Casteel; the Jon and Mary Shirley Foundation; William and Ruth True; and Bagley and Virginia Wright Fund. Presenting Sponsor The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation



Jason Dodge, *Copper pipes connected to the water supply your dear, sub-marine*, 2009.  
Collection William and Ruth True  
Photo: Cary Whittier

## Jason Dodge

08.27.13

Jason Dodge's first permanent installation is located in the tower of a former MaxMara electrical factory, adjacent to the Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia, Italy. A permanently open window consists of a window that is perpetually ajar, two cedar doors, and a sculpture titled Alphabet. Dodge is known for works that poetically defy everyday perception, and here he discusses the specificities of transforming this window into a "beacon."

FUNDAMENTALLY, I'm interested in abstraction, and presence. I was thinking about how I wanted to make an abstract body that is not obviously detectable but could potentially be present in exhibitions on a molecular level, an alphabet. Much of my work concentrates on the notion of how something means something as opposed to what something means, and this flexibility of perception drives the way a work is seen and experienced. I'm not dictating how it is experienced; I'm just dictating a realm of possible situations based on what is perceived.



Jason Dodge, A permanently open window. Photo: C. Dario Lasagni.

A permanently open window began several years ago. I was considering the site of the work, the warehouse, as a place where Luigi Maramotti played as a child. I had a thought about making a beacon that could somehow be rooted in a memory of a place that someone has known for their entire life—a place that has been renovated and repurposed. I was interested in working with the tower, but also with the notion of air going through the window, and so I made, in a sense, a window that's open forever—since it's described as being permanently open. It blocks the building from being repurposed again.

If you were to visit the window, a staff member would give you a key and walk you over. Then you would open the door and go into the tower if you wanted. When you see the work from the outside, however, you don't get the sense of it being even remotely accessible. You really get the sense that it's not an accessible window—it has a reticent distance. It's not a light leading you home or something like that; it's not a window that seems to be open for a reason.

Yet once you're inside, the work questions what it means to see something that changes depending on what time of day it is, what the weather's like, what time of year it is, and so on. I'm interested in that movement of perception in terms of abstraction, but also I think it's important to be able to recognize what something is. If you went in and there were a bird in there, which there very well could be, it would change the whole thing. The Maramotti staff agreed not to put any kind of netting or anything like that to keep animals from going in. It has to just be what it is.

I am not interested in overtly mystical or spiritual notions. I think there is just something about presence, though. The core of my interest in most of the art I look at, which is mostly centuries or millennia old, stems from the fact that the people making it didn't necessarily care about the subject, which was already decided. And yet such art can tell you so much about presence, says something about what it means to be a human, what it means to be alive.

— As told to Lauren O'Neill-Butler

JASON DODGE

*a hole through speaking.*

One could be forgiven for calling Jason Dodge a minimalist. The handful of rooms of his that I have been inside—although a sculptor and therefore a maker of objects and handler of things, I think of him primarily as a creator or composer of spaces—have all been sparse in the extreme. A low-lying stack of fluffed-up white pillows to the far right (as one enters the space); copper tubing, discreetly snaking its way around a deserted Kunstverein (containing something); a single lightning rod on the floor, almost (but not quite) parallel with the museum's blank wall; and, most incongruous of all, almost spectacularly so, a dead snowy owl hugging the edge of a booth at an art fair. Not much, in short. To call these works minimal, however, would be to grossly miss the point of their secretive fullness. The spaces may appear minimal, perhaps, but the discreetly positioned objects in them are anything but— they bristle and brim with silent life. Their secret ingredients can turn any room into a clamoring, boisterous affair— something that is perhaps better named maximalist instead. (But let's not.) And 'what' is so palpably present in these voids is really a 'who': the people whose heads rested on these pillows, or whose hands wove a cloth the color of the night; a veritable dynasty of bell-makers, fathers and sons; those who doused their home in the deepest darkness after diligently screwing out every light bulb in the house, after handing over every lighter and candle; a rustling swarm of notes left behind for debtors and loved ones; unknown, unknowable lives— throngs of 'them' and 'they.'

Almost too much, in a way, because it is they, not a that— certainly nothing that could be brushed aside as the umpteenth variation on that most tired and tedious and shopworn of all dictums, "less is more." What's more—

One could equally be forgiven for calling Jason Dodge a poet. He is a sculptor (maker of objects, handler of things), and words, to a certain extent, have little to do with what he does in turn. Yet there is no mistaking the syntactic quality of his peculiarly economic way with objects, things. The deliberate scansion that imbues his command of space—his material phraseology, so to speak. One word, right there—and then a comma, there. The writer's art of pacing and spacing, the poet's bellyaching over the precise order of three nouns on a page, for instance, resembles the artist's serene resolution in devising the right rhythm for a given space— and 'empty' is just what it looks like, not what it feels like.

Jason and I no longer live in the same city alas, but when we did we used to meet up every now and then for a couple of beers in an inconspicuous little bar called San Remo and talk about poetry for an hour or two. His compatriot Kenneth Koch never once came up, but I just read the opening lines of a poem of his that put all of this in fewer words of course: "In a poem, one line may hide another line / As at a crossing, one train may hide another train." Nothing less.

—Dieter Roelstraete

**Kunstverein Nürnberg**

Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft

**Jason Dodge**

**Opening: 23 November 2012, 6.30 pm**

**Exhibition: 24 November 2012 – 17. February 2013**

-The motivation that unites all of my films is to give back to reality its original sacred significance.  
[Pasolini, Interview mit Guy Flatley, 1969]

For his solo exhibition at the Kunstverein Nürnberg – Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft, Jason Dodge has combined new and older works that tell a new story rather like a recombining of given words. For the most part, Jason Dodge's works comprise a title and a combination of a few or individual, familiar items from everyday life. Apart from the objects and their titles, the rooms are empty. Sometimes these objects are so banal and familiar, such as a flute, a light bulb or a blanket that you might stroll by completely unaware that there »is« anything there or that something is actually »taking place« – it's like a light waft of wind on the neck: Dodge's work requires a great deal of attentiveness and openness in order to notice its presence and perceive its aura at all.

The title is an important part of the work in this regard and can be compared to the way in which the material of a sculpture functions. With the brief description of the elements – sometimes the titles sound almost like haiku – which cannot be seen, or the action to be carried out or that can be carried out by the object, Dodge effectively renders something visible and tangible that in reality can only be felt. What happens when poison is hidden in a bass flute and what if a bell is mounted on the chimney sweep's broom and the sweep uses it to clean chimneys? Objects and words act as the stimulus for a sculptural idea here: the invisible element is supplemented in the thoughts of every viewer, thus completing the sculpture.

Jason Dodge's works play upon the absence of concept and material, as indeed they do in this exhibition at the Kunstverein Nürnberg. Absence can adopt a variety of forms. It becomes »visible« and tangible in footprints, tracks or odours of something or someone, by a missing element in the room, such as the light or heating, through the emptiness of a place or the invisibility of an object named in the title. At first glance, the exhibition rooms seem to be almost empty, but they slowly begin to fill up through the very consciousness of the presence of something absent – something that is mentally present: shapes, images, places, smells, feelings, people with whom we have a direct personal connection, arise in the mind – present absentees so to speak.

Jason Dodge's works do not attempt to represent anything or to convey a concept, or indeed, to evoke a fictional world, rather they present reality and, in a broader sense, they refer to the poetry of reality which is very personal to each and every one of us.

Artist's Lecture: 21 November, at 7 pm in the auditorium of the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg

## Jason Dodge

22 March to 9 June 2013



Jason Dodge, Exhibition view, 2012, Kunstverein Nürnberg

At first glance, Dodge's exhibitions may seem sparse or unelaborate. In fact, the objects presented are carriers of action in processes that are often staged over a long period of time. His works usually consist of objects that are familiar from everyday life, and a title. The gap between the two evokes a story – possibly something that really happened, possibly a fiction – thus referring to the poetic potential of reality.

Yet with all his references to what is absent and hidden, Dodge has an unmediated affinity to things, to their presence in space. He lets us partake of his fascination with how things circulate, how they are charged with value or not, how they are infected by the events in which they play a role. However, Dodge also has a penchant for poetry, for music, for craftsmanship, for natural phenomena (weather, light, air currents) and a lively interest in how the personality of a person is reflected in their things and their living environment, the place that people take in life and how they got there.

Following the most recent solo exhibitions in the Kunstverein Hannover, 2010, and in the Kunstverein Nürnberg, 2012, this is the artist's first exhibition in Austria.

Jason Dodge, born 1969 in Newton, Pennsylvania, lives in Berlin.

Head of project: Stella Rollig

**LA TRIENNALE  
INTENSE PROXIMITY  
DU 20 AVRIL AU 26 AOÛT 2012**

Born in 1969, Newton, United States – Lives in Berlin, Germany

“Generally, it is the people, the subjects that are lacking in what I do. I’m talking to you about them, but they’re not there. It’s as if I were using the feeling of loss as material.” In the artistic process of Jason Dodge, viewing is inseparable from feeling. And it seems straightforward enough, even natural. The artist’s works constantly put forth the creative process, a story, an experience, and quite often discretely bear the marks of an invisible collaboration.

For Intense Proximity, Jason Dodge presents a collection of several works that attest to his penchant for hijacking objects from the everyday, evoking the domestic universe, displacements and sound: flutes, a scale, a pile of white sheets, a dark blue blanket, etc. But no description could capture the complete sense alive in the objects. For example, Above the Water is, at first glance, a blanket left on the ground—the work is, in fact, the result of the artist’s order to a weaver attempting represent the distance between the Earth and the sky and choosing a shade of blue that resembled the night sky. Anyone, a pile of sheets similarly left on the ground, is the most recent piece—replaced weekly by a hotel laundry service, these sheets that are, in theory, not interesting bear traces of hundreds of sleeping bodies, recorded in the invisible history of its presence. Intriguing, disturbing, elusive, Dodge’s creations often leave his public in a particular confusion. When asked about this, the artist affirmed: “You don’t generally know what things are by looking at them. Nor do you know what they were, what they have inside of them or what they’ve touched—just like you are ignorant to someone with a broken heart, someone carrying a gun, the amount of electricity circulating, who wore that, what country are residents connected to by this satellite. That’s how the world was made, I find that it’s an interesting way to approach a work of art.” Distance and proximity, indifference and intimacy, or how post-conceptual art undertakes a poetic revival.



Jason Dodge In Nova Scotia, Jan de Graaf chose wool yarn the color of night, and wove the distance from the earth to above the weather, 2011 Collection Cypanga, Paris Courtesy the artist. © Horace Aand

**Museum of  
Contemporary Art  
Chicago**

## **The Language of Less (Then and Now)**

October 8, 2011- April 8, 2012  
Preview October 6

Foregrounding MCA Chicago's belief that history is always under constant re-appraisal, especially by artists, *The Language of Less (Then and Now)* will reintroduce now-classic Minimalist artworks to the public alongside work by artists who are reconfiguring this language for today-and deservedly gaining international attention.

Artists such as Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, and Richard Serra pioneered a stripped-down aesthetic that allowed audiences to focus on fundamental concepts that shape our world, such as solids and voids, repeating patterns, elemental structures, and ancient principles of proportion. From there, a clearer appreciation of the world was offered, perhaps as a way of establishing a firm footing in a period in the late 1960s and early 1970s characterized by social and political upheaval, war, and rapidly evolving technology. In many ways, our current situation can be similarly described, and many artists are again returning to a spare formal language to slow us down, clarify thinking, and inspire reflection.

However, where the 1960s generation largely sought to distance itself from the heroic, emotive gestures of the abstract expressionists by adopting a more impersonal and neutral tone through their use of industrial materials and repetitive patterns, current practitioners are imbuing



their work with an increasing amount of poetic, personal, and even romantic content. Across the work of Leonor Antunes (Berlin), Carol Bove (New York), Jason Dodge (Berlin), Gedi Sibony (New York), and Oscar Tuazon (Paris), visitors will recognize a shared aesthetic of restraint, but will also find a warmer, more obviously humane, even domestic quality to their efforts. Likewise, the established canon of historical Minimalism has been enriched in recent years by the rediscovery of pioneering talents that had slipped from view. The MCA has responded to these revisions with recent acquisitions by artists such as Tony Conrad, Charlotte Posenenske, and Franz Erhard Walther, all of which will debut in *The Language of Less*. The dual nature of the exhibition will provide a historical context for understanding the new developments among the younger generation of artists, while also offering a chance to reflect on the groundbreaking rigor and elegance of the earlier artists who made "Minimalism" part of our collective parlance.

**Michael Darling**  
James W. Alsdorf Chief Curator

Above: Charlotte Posenenske, Series E Kleiner Drehflügel (Small Revolving Vane), 1967-. Lacquered sheet aluminum. Dimensions variable. Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Mary and Earle Ludgin by exchange, 2011. 12.©1967-68 Charlotte Posenenske

Lead support for this exhibition is generously provided by Howard and Danna Stone.

Major support is provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Additional support is provided by the Neisser Family Fund, Jill and Peter Kraus, the Robert Lehman Foundation Inc., the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, and Greene Nottali, New York.

TERRA  
Foundation for American Art

*The Language of Less (Then and Now)* exhibition catalogue, edited by Michael Darling

# Jason Dodge

Kunstverein Hannover, Germany

Visiting a Jason Dodge exhibition is like a journey in which imagination is your compass and the limits of time and space expand. If this is true of presentations that take place in small galleries, it was even more so in the spacious rooms of the Kunstverein Hannover, where Dodge presented his most comprehensive show to date. In an almost circular path that led through five rooms, a selection of works from 2004 to 2010 seemed to be floating in the institution's immaculate white space under only natural light. Grouped together following more or less close associations, or left alone in rather mysterious isolation, these works revealed themselves as fragments of a larger plot as elusive as the exhibition's title: 'I Woke up. There Was a Note in My Pocket Explaining What Had Happened'.

Dodge's works usually consist of objects or groups of objects that have undergone different stages of manipulation or transformation. Some have been slightly altered: emeralds inserted into the body of an owl (*Emeralds Inside an Owl*, 2009); undeveloped photographic paper exposed at sunrise on the vernal equinox in eight different places around the world (*Into Black*, 2006); flutes stuffed with poison hemlock (one of them titled *Poison Hemlock in an Alto Flute*, 2009). Others have been fabricated under the artist's instructions as described by the work's title: *In Lübeck, Germany, Mariele Scholtz Wove a Piece of Cloth. She Was Asked to Choose Yarn the Color of Night and Equalling the Distance (12 km) From the Earth to Above the Weather* (2008). Works also originate as elements removed from domestic spaces: different devices that produce light were taken from a house at the edge of a forest in Sweden and strewn across the floor (*Darkness Falls on Källhamra, 646 96, Stjärnhov*, 2009); a long copper pipe traversed the exhibition space to be connected with the water system on the roof (*Your Death, Submarine, Copper Pipes Connected to Water*, 2009). Only recently has Dodge presented objects in the form of pure ready-mades, as in the case of pillows that have only been slept on by doctors (*The Doctors Are Sleeping*, 2010).

In Dodge's work, objects act like carriers or relics of actions that took place elsewhere, in a distant time and place. Often the artist acts as a kind of transmitter of a signal that takes the form of instructions or requests to perform a certain action or manufacture a particular material. The action produces an object - a work. The work embodies an elusive and often poetic narrative, the veracity of which viewers aren't quite assured. Evoking an action that took place somewhere far beyond our gaze, the evanescence of a natural phenomenon or a mental image, these objects reverberate with an absence that produces a sense of permanent longing. Dodge's work is imbued with constant references to the world of natural phenomena, alchemical

processes and the way materials, actions and stories are possibly interconnected. Many of his works represent a world sustained by an infinite web of associations: materials that transmit energy, animals that transmit messages, objects that transmit images, musical instruments in a state of potentiality, and soon. Seen together, his works reveal a coherent formal sensibility that combines an almost decadent elegance with an attention for materials and objects revealed in their own bare or raw states.

Dodge's practice straddles two distinct sensibilities: on one side, pre-Romantic and Romantic thinking, from Friedrich Schelling to Novalis; on the other side, the legacy of Conceptual art, embodied especially in its most poetic representatives (Robert Barry and Lawrence Weiner come to mind). The two movements seem occasionally to merge in Dodge's practice, if we think about the important role that *poiesis* plays for both of them. The creative instant, the indeterminate level of artistry, *poiesis* must be provoked or evoked by very synthetic means. If Conceptual art removed or distanced the object or the event to an unreachable 'elsewhere', alluding to it solely with texts, maps, schemes and instructions, Dodge makes the object the emotional conductor that unfolds a narrative or activates an image. It is surprising and compelling to see how the allusive fragility of the stories and the objects Dodge uses in his practice don't lose any of their imaginative power or intensity in a large-scale exhibition such as this one.

Luca Cerizza

**Jason Dodge**  
**Your Death, Submarine,**  
**Copper Pipes Connected**  
**to Water**  
2009  
Copper piping, cardboard  
and a tap  
Dimensions variable





Jason Dodge., *Your moveable and un-moveable parts / a broken furnace removed from house, and a box / that carried a new furnace*, 2009, mixed media dimensions variable.

From Trisha Donnelly to Jonathan Monk to Simon Starling, Casey Kaplan Gallery represents a number of artists whose conceptually inflected artwork constructs or relies upon narrative scaffolding. So, too, does Jason Dodge's slow-burn art. His sixth exhibition at this gallery was visually unprepossessing but upon reflection revealed engaging emotional and psychological complexities. Take, for example, in order of imagined altitude / an astronomer, a meteorologist, an ornithologist, a geologist, and a civil engineer, cut pockets from their trousers (all works 2009). One would be hard-pressed to know, without the title, what to make of the small pile of pieces of fabric resting on a pedestal. The idiosyncratic professional hierarchy suggested by the arrangement, funny on its own, is buttressed by knowledge of *Above the Weather*, 2007, an earlier work (not in this show) for which Dodge commissioned a Polish woman to knit a length of yarn equivalent to the distance from the surface of the earth to the height at which one is "above the weather." Together, these sculptures manifest Dodge's sky-gazing Romantic conflation of science and poetry, perhaps akin to that of the enthusiastic amateurs Richard Holmes describes in his appropriately titled recent book *Age of Wonder* (2008).

As evidenced in the rest of this exhibition, for Dodge, poetry most often takes precedence. That was the show's chief strength and its primary liability. As flat-footed works such as *light and glove* or *sleeping bag / air / a tenor recorder* suggest, it can be exceedingly difficult to communicate to viewers the ineffable meanings that

cling to demure arrangements of everyday objects. *Your moveable and un-moveable parts / a broken furnace removed from house, and a box / that carried a new furnace* demonstrates the limit of this methodology at its other extreme. The objects Dodge selected—a broken furnace and the box of its replacement—suggest rich connections to both a city's arterial infrastructure systems and to the lives once and soon to be literally warmed by the furnace. It is his self-conscious intervention into this arrangement, two small pieces of pink paper on which the word *VIOLINS* is written, that comes off as affected and twee. A current (electric) / through / (A) tuning fork / and light achieves a better balance. No more than a lightbulb whose long electrical cord has been sliced open to allow the copper wiring to be soldered to the ends of a tuning fork, the sculpture prompts koanlike questions such as, *What is the sound of light?*

The strongest artwork in the exhibition alone proved the value of Dodge's explorations at the edge of sentimentality. (Its descriptive title is too long to reproduce here.) To make the work, Dodge typed a woman's full married name, divided into syllables, on narrow strips of paper that he affixed to the legs of homing pigeons, which returned to Berlin from Kraków, Poland. He did the same for the woman's maiden name, though this time the pigeons carried the paper slips from western Ohio to New York. Her Germanic maiden name, Eleanor M. Edelman, hints at a personal history that might likewise have included an emigration from Kraków or Berlin to the United States. A missing syllable in her maiden name—what happened to that pigeon?—underscores the extreme uncertainty of any such flight. These conceptually linked journeys can also be tied to the risky, speculative process of artmaking itself. By installing the framed slips of paper on opposing walls, Dodge summoned a poignant affective charge that even the most detached viewer would have difficulty not feeling.

—Brian Sholis

## JASON DODGE



1969 geboren in Newton, PA, USA,  
lebt und arbeitet in Berlin, Deutschland  
1969 born in Newton, PA, USA,  
lives and works in Berlin, Germany

[www.luetgenmeijer.com](http://www.luetgenmeijer.com)  
[www.massimodecarlo.it](http://www.massimodecarlo.it)  
[www.yvon-lambert.com](http://www.yvon-lambert.com)

Your death, sub  
marine  
2009  
Installation view, Kunstverein Hannover

Wenn man die sparsamen, scheinbar banalen und doch elegant komponierten Anordnungen von Objekten betrachtet - etwa eine Sammlung von Glühbirnen, Kerzen und Streichholzern, ein Paar Bratschensaiten oder eine einfache zusammengefaltete Decke, die mit einer weißen Schnur umwickelt ist -, würde man kaum glauben, dass die Arbeiten von Jason Dodge zumeist eine fantastische Erzählung beinhalten. Doch sie schließen nicht nur Geschichten mit ein, sondern beruhen auch auf dem Glauben des Betrachters daran und - was vielleicht noch wichtiger ist - auf

dem Vertrauen in sein eigenes Vorstellungsvermögen. So handelt es sich bei der erwähnten Sammlung von Glühbirnen, Kerzen und anderem um eine Arbeit mit dem Titel *Darkness falls on Wolkowyja 74,38-613 Polańczyk, Poland* (2005); sie besteht aus allen Arten von Leuchtmitteln, die sich in einem Haus an einem Waldrand in Polen befanden.

Die beiden Bratschensaiten in *The Viola of Béla Bartók* (2007) wurden von zwei Bratschen abgenommen, die nur ein einziges Mal benutzt wurden, um die namensgebenden Bratschenduos von Bartók zu spielen. Die sorgsam zusammengelegte Decke ist eigentlich ein Wandteppich, der von der Algerierin Djidjiga Meffrer aus einem "nachtfarbenen" (wie der Künstler formuliert) Faden gewebt wurde, dessen Länge von der Erde bis über das Wetter reicht - daher der Werktitel *Above the Weather* (2007).

In allen Fällen verlangt die Geschichte vom Betrachter einen beinahe wissenschaftlichen Optimismus, um in die narrative Sphäre vorzudringen, die jedem seiner Werke innewohnt, und es dadurch von seiner anfänglichen Unergründlichkeit zu erlösen. Zudem wird die Herstellung einer Arbeit, ganz im Geist von Alighiero Boetti, oft an einen Mitarbeiter delegiert - der immer namentlich genannt wird und daher für die Wahrhaftigkeit des Werkes ausdrücklich Mitverantwortung trägt - und an einen fernen Ort verlegt. Dadurch wird die Sinntrachtigkeit des ganzen unwahrscheinlichen Szenarios gesteigert. Dodges romantische und dichte Verschmelzungen von Objekten, Erzählungen, Zeiten und verschiedenen Orten, die an andere Welten denken lassen, umgibt eine treffsichere und starke Poesie.

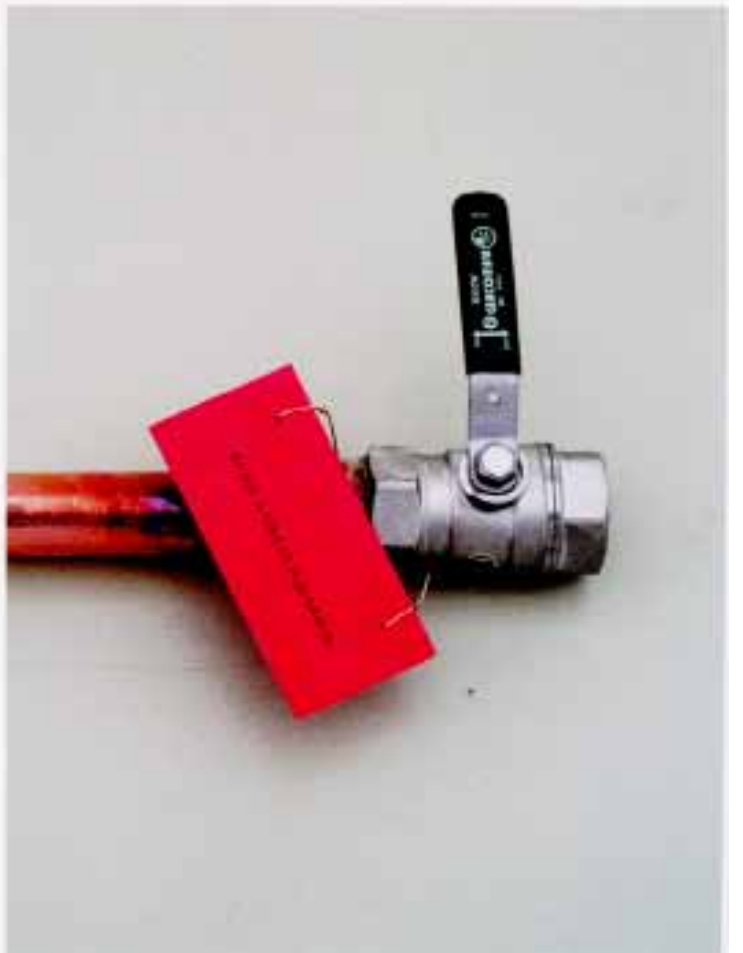
You might never guess by looking at his spare, seemingly banal, and yet elegantly composed conjunctions of objects—from a collection of bulbs, candles, and matches to a pair of viola strings or a simple, folded-up blanket with a white string around it—that the work of Jason Dodge almost always contains a fantastical narrative. Not only does it contain a narrative, it depends on it as well as on the viewer's faith in narrative, and perhaps even more importantly, the viewer's faith in his or her own imagination. For instance, the above-mentioned collection of bulbs, candles, etc. is a work entitled *Darkness falls on Wolkowyja 74, 38-613 Polańczyk, Poland* (2005), and consists of every form of illumination taken from a house on the edge of a forest in Poland.

The pair of viola strings in *The Viola of Béla Bartók* (2007) were taken off a pair of violas after they had been used only once to play the eponymous Bartók duos. The neatly folded blanket is actually a tapestry woven by a woman in Algeria named Djidjiga Meffrer from 'night-coloured' (artist's specification) string that equals the distance from the earth to above the weather—hence the title *Above the Weather* (2007).

In each case, the story requires that the viewer take an almost scientific leap of faith into the narrative ether that demurely lurks within each work, thus redeeming it from any initial inscrutability. What is more, in the spirit of Alighiero Boetti, the labour of each piece is often outsourced to a collaborator who is always named and therefore explicitly complicit in its veracity—and displaced to a distant location, which gives the whole, implausible scenario even more evocative teeth. Redolent of elsewhere, Dodge's romantic and compact confluences of objects, narratives, times, and disparate places deal in a deft and powerful poetry.

**Chris Sharp**

**GALERIE  
ALLEN**



JASON DODGE



Exhibition view, 2008  
Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin

In Lübeck, Germany, Marlies Scholz wove a piece of cloth. She was asked to choose yarn the color of night and equaling the distance (12km) from the earth to above the weather  
2008

Darkness falls on  
Källhamra, 646 96, Stjärnhov.  
Everything that makes light, was taken from  
a house at the edge of a forest in Sweden  
2008

In Algeria, Djidjiga Meffrer has woven a tap-  
estry from string equaling the distance from  
the earth to above the weather; she was  
asked to choose string the color of night  
2008



Window Hook, Quail, 2009. Photo: Cary Whittier.  
Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York



*When I woke up, there was a note in my pocket explaining what had happened*, the full title of Jason Dodge's latest show at Casey Kaplan, introduces the elliptical structure that stitches the handful of exhibited works to their titles. For example, a stack of cut pockets is paired with two statements attributing their respective positions to the imagined altitudes of the astronomer, meteorologist, ornithologist, geologist and civil engineer to whom they supposedly belonged. Characteristic of the artist's recent output, the viewer is asked to step into the roles of detective, literary critic and spiritualist alike, reading the titles' explanatory claims against the material evidence on display, triangulating players and back stories from glancing allusions, and even weighing Dodge's tacit invitation to suspend disbelief, so that the small moments he has carefully assembled in the gallery space may adequately evoke the wonderment and loneliness and mystery of life. If these strategies feel rather commonplace in an era of barely-there poetical postconceptualism, it merits reminding that Dodge is no latecomer to the field, and while some of his works lean so heavily upon their elisions as to risk preciousness and sham nostalgia, he more often than not proves an empathetic and inspired storyteller.

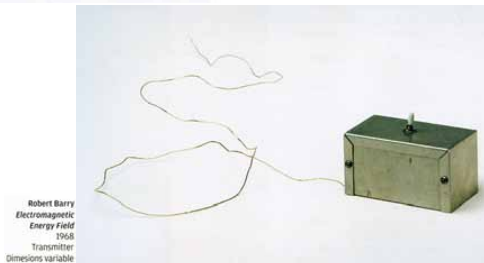
**Jason Dodge**  
When I Woke Up...

Casey Kaplan, New York  
10 September - 24 October

An oversize cardboard box and old furnace obstruct the threshold of Casey Kaplan's entry gallery, where Dodge presents a deliberately cramped constellation of works, including a quail recipe affixed to the wall by a window hook; the pockets; a tenor recorder covered by a folded sleeping bag; and a leather glove, unbuttoned to accommodate a metal light fixture. These juxtapositions carry a low-grade surrealist quality, their constituent parts looking too banal to accommodate much additional psychosexual frisson - which may very well be to Dodge's liking. In their seeming resilience to transmuting into anything more sculptural than the empirical givens, they incite a similar discomfiture as a certain famous sardine can floating on the sea. 'You see that can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!' a local fisherman noted once to a young Jacques Lacan, though to the psychoanalyst the can did seem to stare back, its gaze potentiating a field of visuality and identity exceeding conventional anthropocentric delineations. Dodge has mentioned his interest in the poems of Dan Chiasson written from the point of view of objects. His sculptural combines arrive in the gallery through a similar conceit, with the excision of previous owners, histories and uses inducing phantasmagoric auras that only accentuate their ontic presence.

Even a detective meets his maker. In the main gallery, a long copper pipe runs through a square hole in the gallery wall and (allegedly) into the gallery's main water supply. A metal lever, at pipe's end, issues a provocation, redoubled by an attached note that entreats the viewer to 'build a great aquarium.' The projective fatalism of the aforementioned works is here compressed into a straightforward, causal chain, sensationalist in its restraint, awe-striking in its watery promise: a fast idea, fading just as quickly. *Tyler Coburn*

**The Quick  
and the Dead**



Robert Barry  
*Electromagnetic  
Energy Field*  
1968  
Transmitter  
Dimensions variable

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA

At the entrance to 'The Quick and the Dead' is a sort of overture- an eclectic cluster of works brought together in a small anteroom. It includes a 1969 text by Robert Barry from his series 'Leverkusen Pieces' ('Something that is taking shape in my mind and will sometime come to consciousness') and an On Kawara date painting. Another Kawara piece is depicted in a photograph by Louise Lawler, its time-stopping melancholy intensified by its domestic setting. A speaker in a corner plays a composition by Arthur Russell, as it was initially released in 1984: accidentally mastered at half-speed, a foggy, lugubrious drift. At the other end of the gallery space, another niche acts as a mirror image coda: the corrected version of the Russell piece, another Kawara, another Lawler, and another Barry text from the same series ('Something I was once conscious of, but have now forgotten'). This book-ending imparts a through-the-looking-glass quality to the entire show, suggesting some kind of hiccup in the space-time continuum, an alternate world somehow spliced into the museum space.

At the most basic level, 'The Quick and the Dead', which includes 53 artists, is a show about Conceptual art, but it doesn't feel much like a Conceptual art show. Willfully eclectic, gorgeously eerie and unabashedly theatrical, its perspective and tone seems more indebted to science fiction than to art history. At the core

of the exhibition is an idiosyncratic selection of work by first-generation conceptualists: Barry, Douglas Huebler, and Adrian Piper among them, as well as less celebrated figures like David Lamelas and Stephen Kaltenbach. But curator Peter Eleey is, as he notes in the catalogue, 'more concerned with affect than representation'. So the show also ranges through an assortment of viscerally and visually engaging work, of various periods and '-isms', including film, video, music, scientific photography and mathematical proofs.

Underlying this expansive curatorial mode is a notion of Conceptual art as a strategy of expansion itself. While the show's mise-en-scene works primarily to create a mood, there is also an argument being pressed: a compelling push-back against a reductive 'art-about art' reading of the Conceptual turn. In the familiar art historical story, idea-based work is essentially the culmination of a successive 20th-century dematerialization of the objector 'some end game of modernism', as Eleey writes in the catalogue. 'The Quick and the Dead' reconceives this retreat from form as, paradoxically, a kind of enlargement of scope, reaching beyond the merely physical world to travel in an expanded realm.

Barry's *Electromagnetic Energy Field* (1968), perhaps the show's emblematic centerpiece, serves as a powerful illustration of this argument. Displayed in a vitrine, a battery-powered transmitter encased in a nondescript metal box sends out waves of energy, filling the gallery space with an invisible, immeasurable, but nonetheless real force. Perched between spiritualism and physics, the device is intended to create a literally charged atmosphere. Something similar is at work in Kris Martin's *Anonymous II* (2009). The artist had a human skeleton (originally

intended for medical research, then passed from David Wojnarowicz to Kiki Smith to Martin) permanently interred below an unmarked patch of the Walker's lawn. An official-looking document provides GPS coordinates to the nearby site: it functions as a kind of textual transmitter, transforming the gallery space with an uncanny bit of information.

'The Quick and the Dead' is, appropriately enough, a death-haunted show. Taxidermy by Maurizio Cattelan (a small dog curled in a corner) and Jason Dodge (an owl, supposedly containing precious gems inside its chest) offer unsettlingly life-like versions of death, as does Steve McQueen's *Running Thunder* (2007), a silent film loop of a horse carcass lying in a field. Death-like versions of life are suggested by a number of premature post-mortem works: sealed time-capsules by Kaltenbach; Martin's *Still Alive* (2005), a full-size silver-plated model of a skull; and Piper's *What Will Become of Me* (1985-ongoing), a collection of the artist's hair and nail clippings, which will eventually include her cremated remains.

Filled with canny visual rhymes and recurrences, the show often functions as a lexicon of mysteriously resonant - almost totemic- objects. Clocks, watches and calendars suggest time gone strange, shot through with subjectivity. Mirrors- used in works by Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Marcel Duchamp - play analogous headgames in the realm of the spatial.

The automobile is proposed as a surprisingly numinous object. Michael Sailstorfer's *Zeit ist keine Autobahn* (*Time is not a motorway*, 2009) features a tyre grinding itself unceasingly down against a wall; in a sculpture by Roger Hiorns, an engine block crusted over with bright blue copper sulfate crystals conjures up another worldly, IG. Ballard-esque aura. Paul Ramirez Jonas' lovely video *Longer Day* (1997) presents the artist driving west towards the sunset, trying futilely to extend his hours of daylight. Like all the work in 'The Quick and the Dead', it is a moving and melancholy attempt to journey beyond the here and now.

- Steven Stern



Jason Dodge, FOUR CARAT BLACK TOURMALINE AND HALF CARAT RUBY INSIDE AN OWL, During the process of embalment, precious gems have been placed inside of an owl, 2007  
Mixed media, 5 x 18 x 13 cm

*Carr, Adam. "Jason Dodge". Spike Art Quarterly, Issue 16, 2008.*

**Jason Dodge**

Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin 02/05—07/06/2008

Massimo De Carlo, Milan 08/05—28/06/2008

Those who are fairly familiar with the work of Jason Dodge will be accustomed to the very few pieces he produces per year. Although this might suggest a minimal, almost spare, and more to the point, empty output, nothing else could be far from the truth when looking at the artist's work, which could be described as a dense, strikingly rich oeuvre, comprised of pieces that are marvellously considered, wondrously conceptually and beautifully executed.

Dodge's work, in essence, directs an audience's attention to their own impulses of thought, imbuing the creation of personal narratives, but avoids the clichés that one might consider when reading this particular description. His works almost always result from a sequence of personally assigned actions, carried out by individuals of whom had been chosen for their very particular occupations or location (a weaver, an air pilot, or those in dispersed parts of the world during the equinox). Focusing on the role of interpretation and perception, and placing the poetic into the foreground, they harness the ability to imaginatively engage viewers with situations, of objects that perform mutely—all a trace of an event but seemingly devoid of their subject. Pivotal, the title of each work—and the artist's pervasive focus on, and use of, descriptive language contained in each—functions as a key intermediary between the objects and the viewer, thus unfolding the pieces' meaning, history and ultimately enabling their uniqueness.

Despite the artist's refusal to deal in over production, two recent solo exhibitions—of which ran almost concurrently—presented 10 new pieces, while revealing a point of departure to the approaches undertaken, and the ideas underpinning, the aforementioned. At Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin and Galleria Massimo De Carlo, Milan, the style of presentation suggested a transportation of objects from the eras of land art or art povera (a constant in his exhibitions), also notably having the titles of work printed over 3 to 4 pieces of paper, pinned to the wall, and positioned in the same way as that of the pieces. In Lubeck, Germany Mariele Schultz wove a piece of cloth. She was asked to chose yarn the colour of night and equalling the distance (12km) from the earth to above the weather (2008) demonstrates Dodge's approach perfectly, leaving us to consider the position of the piece—and subsequently our own—in relation to the world around us. Another work, They are waiting for you at the monument they (the brass band is) are waiting for you at the monument (2008), consisted of brass band instruments, but unlike his previous work where we try to reverse the process of each (like a detective with the title evidencing the objects historical trajectory), intentionally it remained unclear what the precise origins of these objects are: are they the possessions of a previous band or one in current existence? Who are the people waiting exactly? This piece is part of a new body that the artist describes as "diagrams". Another comprised a tube filled with poisoned hemlocks, versions of which were each present at both exhibitions, with the largest at Lüttgenmeijer traversing an entire section of the gallery wall. Also present at Lüttgenmeijer were further diagrammatic works: one consisting of an electrical current running through a tuning fork to a lamp; another, combining a gold ring and an egg of a homing pigeon; and batteries from a radio positioned on the gallery floor to point north. With what seems to place focus on an impression or literal observation via a combination of objects, rather than metaphor or allusion—or elevating the performance and history involved in each as seen in his older pieces—these works add a newly compelling dimension to an already impressive oeuvre.

Various items measured; attached end to end, their length would reach the troposphere. A gold-plated lightning rod pointing north. A deserted badminton court; at the edge, a room where someone's clothes strewn about imply a rendezvous. Not ices in front of a museum announce that Dr. Franz Josef Lubken , a meteorological physicist, has seen the night-glowing clouds of the Arctic and Antarctic circles. A collection of light sources ranging from light bulbs to matches that once illuminated a holiday home in Poland. A bell that has rung in the chimneys of the Kreuzberg district of Berlin.

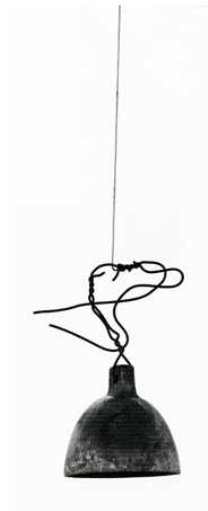
The works of Jason Dodge reference events that lie in the past or at an unreachable distance, events that occurred in discrete privacy or were so transient that they could not be captured. And yet they are precisely described by the objects left behind after their completion and by Dodge's clearly-formulated titles. Dodge's installations give rise to a feeling of longing; when viewing them, one must always consider what they lack. In no time at all, the viewer's thoughts will lead to a distant place - a sunrise in Helsinki, for example, or Kerkenstraat in Merkelbeek or a Polish holiday home. As relics , the objects of his installations seem to yearn for the completion that only the viewer can accomplish in his own thoughts.

**RINGI NG IN CHIMNEYS**

A bell attached to the brush of chimney sweep Jorg Hauseler during the spring chimney cleaning in a neighborhood in Berlin. 2007

But since the places, people and events required for that completion must ultimately remain foreign to the viewer, his very participation also remains an unfulfilled wish. In an interview, the artist admits that literature is an important stimulus for his work . But rather than specific novels or poems, it is the act of writing itself - the application of ink to paper - that sparks certain ideas. In a similar process, the objects in Jason Dodge's works present themselves to the viewer as words of a story. Yet the story is never linear; it opens up different spaces of association for different people. The objects function as finely thought-out stimuli that trigger the imagination as if through electricity and convert it to a state of desire. Due to the often exotic objects and circumstances of the works, the viewer's desire to have witnessed the story alluded to, once aroused, results in a strong longing for the unlive life that each of our decisions brings wit it. Who hasn't at one point imagined something as unusual as traveling to hte North or South Pole, reaching the place where the weather is made, or having a message delivered by homing pigeon? Who wouldn't like the film of

## In This Way Everything In The Distance Becomes Poetry Friederike Schonhuth



life to be played backwards just once, like Jason Dodge does when he throws a bar of silver through a window back into an exhibition space instead of stealing it?

These are often fantasies from childhood, wishes and dreams that every one has pictured and later forgotten. Not Jason Dodge. Even if he sets off on actual journeys as in frequently as we do, he seems to have been to all the places where we, when looking at his work, would also like to have been. Rather than give up wishing, Dodge has turned it in to his art. For him, unfulfilled longing has become a romantic mission, the impulses of which he follows time and time again.

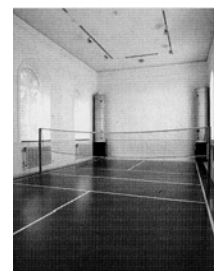
"In this way everything in the distance becomes poetry - poem. Actio in Distans. Distant mountains, distant people, distant events, etc., everything becomes romantic, quod idem est." This fragment of Novalis, whose Blue

Flower became the symbol of longing for an entire epoch, all but nestles up to the work of the contemporary artist. Like Novalis, Dodge maintains a broken relationship with the rationalized world and expands its horizon through emotionalized fabrications.

He can thus be understood as standing in the tradition of Fichte's concept of longing, in which it is the "desire for the completely unknown" that lends the creative power to connect the inner world to the outer world, that provides the epistemological possibility to establish contact with one's surroundings.

It is not only the central motif of longing that characterizes Dodge's work as romantic, but also its narrative for him. For Friedrich Schlegel, "the history

of modern poetry is a perpetual commentary on this philosophical axiom: all art must become science, all science, art; poetry and philosophy must unite." Precisely in this sense, Jason Dodge links scientific phenomena such as the solstice or the solar eclipse to human events, thus making them tangible and intensifying them as points of longing. He strips his objects of their rationality and provides them with sensorial traces of human action, thereby arousing the viewer's thirst for adventure and the exploratory spirit. Like Kristin Larson or Lorie Karnath, he, too, would like to have traveled to the North or South Pole or been with the Berlin chimney sweep Jürgen Hauseler when he attached a small bell to the tool he worked with, filling all of his chimneys with sound.



YOUR DESCRIPTION OF AN IMPOSSIBLE SCENARIO OF HOW WE COULD BE TOGETHER IS WHAT MADE ME LOVE YOU AND BROKE BOTH OF OUR HEARTS  
Badminton court. 1999

Those objects presented as "remains" and pieces of evidence are always subject of the careful aesthetic selection of the artist, who with each story he tells, simultaneously creates an aural artwork. This connection of concept to tactility establishes the poetic field of tension between the structural demands of narrative and the aesthetic possibility of the perfect artwork in which Dodge's works are always situated.

And even if, in past years, the type of installations he creates have changed from stage-like settings to presentations of discrete, separate objects, longing remains a key to our understanding of them. In this context, the title of a work from 1999 can almost be read as a motto: "Your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together is what made me love you and broke both our hearts." Only the state of unfulfilled longing amounts to happiness.

In Dodge's latest works, a single object often suffices to evoke a particular story. Even if these works at first appear rudimentary - less complete than the earlier works - they are in fact, a second look makes clear, much more complex: the viewer is no longer asked to put himself in the position of another person's relationship, but is now himself placed at the center of a narrative and thus challenged to establish links with other, parallel stories in the exhibition.

What always remains uncertain is how plausible these stories really are. Dodge says he is not interested in proof because it limits rather than expands the possibilities of viewing. And just as he is disinterested in truth, so too is longing itself, for constant wishing is fearful of being fulfilled and thus allows us to indulge in our eternally sweet ache•

## Hopelessness Doesn't Come In Silver

Ronald Jones

Success has always been the greatest liar. 'Great men' as they are venerated become subsequent pieces of wretched minor fiction.  
FREDERICK NIETZSCHE

**W**In mid-retreat between Potsdam and Paris, his relationship to Frederick the Great of Prussia soured, Voltaire received unexpected news from his friend and champion Mme. Pompadour, Louis XV's influential mistress: he was no longer welcome in France. That Mme. Pompadour mistakenly overdrew the king's feelings towards Voltaire matters little now. As it was, the latter collected himself, chose Geneva for his exile, took an estate, renamed it Les Délices and moved in with his lover Mme. Denis. Banishment became an indulgence in domestic bliss and entertaining; as Voltaire described it, a life of "affable manners, simple living, and the culture of the mind." Without a trace of over-stuffed Parisian society, he furnished and decorated Les Délices in assiduous elegance. "We have finally come to enjoy luxury only in taste and convenience," he wrote in *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*. And when he became melancholic at never having become a father, he legally adopted a teen-age girl and began to take pleasure in family life at Les Délices. The writer and philosopher also devoted considerable energy to perfecting the grounds surrounding his villa, planting 4,000 trees, beneath whose boughs sprawled untold gardens, flower beds and neat gravel paths, all tended by two master gardeners. His kitchen garden was sumptuous by today's standards, boasting basil, tarragon, strawberries, rosemary, thyme, mint, sage and a dozen other herbs and spices surrounded by green trellises that he had a hand in designing. After just five months at Les Délices, he wrote to his friend Nicolas-Claude Thiériot after just five months at Les Délices: "I do not know anything to compare with my situation. I did not know this new pleasure, nor that of sowing, planting and building. I would like to have you in this little corner of the earth, where I am very happy." And indeed, as soon as the last touches to the villa and grounds were made, Voltaire's celebrity and reputation for hospitality drew luminaries from across Europe to his "little corner of the earth" at Les Délices. As Voltaire wrote to a friend in Paris, "The best society, of wise and enlightened people, come here almost every day."

"When the Courts of Europe shut their doors, Voltaire embraced exile as his own Horatian ideal of an uncorrupted life, while simultaneously stepping back onto the world's stage to advocate civil liberties and human rights in the face of Christian cruelty on a standard to which we may still aspire 250 years later. While in residence at Les Délices, he completed *L'Histoire du Docteur Akakia et du Natif de Saint-Malo* (1753), *La Pucelle* (1755) *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), *Essai sur l'Histoire Générale et sur les Moeurs et l'Esprit des Nations* (1756) *Candide* (1759), *Traité sur la Tolérance* (1763), *Traité sur la Tolérance* (1763) and *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (1764) From his paradise in exile, Voltaire took revenge, vandalizing European culture using these seminal works as precious stones hurled through the windows of those sacrosanct institutions Court and Catholic Church. His motivation is best expressed by his own notorious motto: *écrasez l'infâme*..

It is not enough to conquer; one must learn to seduce.  
VOLTAIRE

The focal point of *YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE*, Jason Dodge's spare and beautifully-designed installation, could have been inspired by Voltaire's life and accomplishments at Les Délices. A shattered plate-glass window at the museum has been given a provisional repair



using sticky brown box tape, the standard urban operating procedure for mending a store window smashed in during the course of nocturnal mischief by a thief or the tomfoolery of some drunken delinquents. This breach of a ward of culture is cast as a crime scene, acknowledged by the temporary fix-it, but otherwise undisturbed. Flakes of plate-glass lie spewed across the floor, and two meters from the fractured window rests the blunt instrument used to carry off the raid: a one-kilo Credit Suisse bar of silver bumon, number 137198. The ingot is genuine and hefty enough to have done the job.

YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE comes off with theatrical pacing: first, a series of short declarative sentences - the silver bar, the glass shards, the mended window - then, an evaporation into prolonged silence.. Silence on the stage is as important as spoken dialogue, and it is equally weighted in Jason's work. His tempo, leading to a hushed crescendo, inevitably leaves you wondering about what's not being seen. When the brisk visual rhythm drops off, it is as if the installation pulls back to allow you to slare through the broken window. Mapping a trajectory backwards from where the silver bar landed, you can estimate the direction from which it must have come. Normally, visitors to exhibitions narrow their focus to what's inside; that is, after all, the point, but in the case of YOU ALWAYS MOVE REVERSE, things move in reverse. Your concentration insidc the museum is released, and the mystery is all out there; who could be behind this? And what drove him to sneer in such an audacious way, with only arrogance (hopelessness doesn't come in silver) on his side?

Breaking windows with rocks or Molotov cocktails is a bit of rough trade, by now a signature expression of contempt or even revolt. But hurling scorn with silver bullion registers something effete or self-indulgent, over-refined and snobbish or even sterile. How can such a decadent gesture uphold passion or fanaticism, senselessness or outrage? One answer is that Jason has altered the idea of revolt at something like a genetic level, turning the throwing of an ingot in rage into an astonishingly enlightened gesture. This was the act of a gentleman revolutionary hurling his silver towards humankind's institutions, his contempt for civilization rivaled only by his respect for what civilization could become. In serene confidence, the silver bar seems to echo with Voltaire's voice: "Écrasez l'infîme," and do it with what matters.

Paradise is where I am.  
VOLTAIRE

Voltaire wrote the celebrated satire Candide from his villa outside Geneva, Les Délices; it became one of the most precious ingots ever aimed at the establishment. The book was a response to the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, tsunami and fire, which, within six minutes, left a third of Lisbon's population dead and 85 percent of its buildings - palaces, libraries and every cathedral - in ruins. The catastrophe occurred on a Catholic holiday in the capital of a devout Catholic country, leaving theologians and philosophers with little justification for so arbitrary a demonstration of God's wrath. The destruction thus initiated a rundamental transormation of European culture and philosophy, including a revision of the meaning of evil that we still recognize as commonplacc ill our own time. Even 200 years later, the scope or the reform demanded by the disaster resonated with philosopher Theodor Adorno, who comment.ed in Negative Dialectics (1966) that "the earthquake of Lisbon sufficed to

cure Voltaire of the theodicy of Leibniz." Lisbon gave Voltaire the traction and the incentive to lash out against Leibniz, who had famously reasoned that while not everyling in the world was good, ours was nonetheless the best of all possible worlds because God had created this one rather than its lesser version. Leibniz reconciled his belief in a good and loving God with his awareness of the great evils of the world based on the optimistic assumption that our suffering has some greater purposc, at least in the eyes of God. But to Voltaire's mind, survival in Lisbon was totally arbitrary, not the result of divine will intervening. This belief inspired the satiric teeth he gave Candide to saw away at "the best of all possible worlds."

This self-love is the instrument of our preservation; it resembles the provision for the perpetuity of mankind: it is necessary, it is dear to us, it gives us pleasure, and we must conceal it.

VOLTAIRE, Dictionnaire Philosophique (1764)

The violent reproach of YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE is exceptional in .Jason's oeuvre; on the whole, his work is reliably placid. He is capable

of Monty-Python-like scenarios, but his sceneography is bcst when he understates it. In an art world longing to reward the vividly juicy, Jason has made a virtue of being polished and demure. In his choice of subject matter, he is uninscribed to arching themes and allergic to verbatim exposition. Kenneth Tynan, the heart and soul of London's National Theatre, could have been thinking of Jason when he wrote: "Art is a private thing, the artist makes it for himself; a comprehensible work is the product of a journalist. We need works that are strong, straight, precise, and forever beyond understanding." Jason's approach is discriminating, but undeniably flirtatious; you can usually feel his art sweeping over you, gently breathing down your neck. And in the face of work so unaccountably stong and intuitive, you are lucky just to give in.

Jason is anything but anachronistic, though I rarely think of him in relation to his contemporaries; little is gained, I find, on either side of the comparison. This is indeed rare when the history of art isn't the greatest, or even a germane filter to distill the substance of contemporary art. In Jason's case, it is the history of theater, literature and language that has been his greatest ally in locating his place within the creative disciplines. As improbable as it may seem, I have begun thinking of Jason as a distant heir to Voltaire's taste for a life of "affable manners, simple living, and the culture



of the mind," but you would have to know him to know why. Artistically, Jason shares with Voltaire an astonishing gift for pairing idiosyncratic expression with hardboiled parody, and he is especially masterful when employing irony, hyperbole, understatement and especially flawed logic in an intuitive fashion. Like Voltaire, Jason is consummate with theatrics, but his gift is for underplayed pageants staged with the bravura accoutrement peculiar to late modern lives consumed by exclusivity, privilege, wealth and, most enviable of all, eccentricity. One of his accomplishments is that he never forces conflict - say, between inequity and righteousness - in his work. Rather, with the subtlety of a sensitive stage director, he coaxes satire out of each *mise en scène*, but never spares us the attendant cruelties.

We cannot wish for that we know not.  
VOLTAIRE

The University of Coimbra had pronounced that the sight of a few people ceremoniously burned alive in a slow fire was an infallible prescription for preventing earthquakes. So when a 1755 earthquake subsided after destroying three quarters of Lisbon, the authorities of that country could find no other means of avoiding total ruin than by giving the people a magnificent *auto-da-fé*.



Extra City, Antwerpen 2006



In a cruel twist of fate, Candide and his tutor Pangloss survived the earthquake but were subsequently arrested, Candide flogged and Pangloss hanged. Afterwards, "The terrified Candide stood weltering in blood and trembling in fear and confusion. 'If this is the best of all possible worlds,' he said to himself, 'what can the rest be like?'"

If Voltaire was convinced of the absurdity of theodicy, Jason Dodge is convinced of the hypocrisy of vindicating the museum's utopian ideal - or, for that matter, any ideal - simply for having called an end to elitism, racism and commercialism. Jason has retreated from that fool's errand and like Voltaire, chosen his own exile from where to hurl his precious stones.

"Let us work without theorizing," said Martin; "'tis the only way to make life endurable."

VOLTAIRE, *Candide* (1759)

**YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE**

1kg silver bullion thrown through a window into an exhibition space; the silver and glass are left as they land, and the window is repaired with tape. 2004

My Home  
has Directions  
and a Weight

Catrin Lorch

NORTH  
A gilded lightning rod for a tower pointing north. 2006

*Catrin Lorch, "My Home Has Directions and a Weight," Jason Dodge, Editions Yvon Lambert, Paris, 2007, p. 14 - 18*

**N**I have never met him, but I am to write a short text on Jason Dodge for a catalogue and would like to see more of his works. "My studio, that's our apartment," the artist tells me on the phone. When I arrive at the little house at the back of a Berlin courtyard, I am greeted and promptly measured in the hall.

I do not like being put up next to a measuring stick. For me, centimeters are evidence: they give others an image of me that I do not readily share. (the year Jason was born, 1968, has a special meaning in Frankfurt, where I was born; it is the numbers that mean something). I leave behind a little pencil mark on the wall; with the sun shining on it, it looks like a tiny hair lost by my shadow. The text grows over several weeks. Among the reasons it takes so long is that Jason has much to tell, and I want to wrap his sparse and fragile works into favorite passages of his. No art history, just German Romanticism. Romanticism is less emotional than it sounds, having more to do with idealism and distance than sentimental feeling. There are Romantic stories in which approaching and distancing can be bent both convexly and concavely. Like an image in a distorting mirror, what is desired appears unattainably close or almost tangibly shifted out of reach. Jason is in Denmark when I call him. During the equinox, he will marry Christine at the most northern point of her homeland. The longest day of the year is a little longer there than in Berlin or the Siebengebirge, where I live.

I write the words in English and send them to him as an email so that he can look them over. Jason promised me that no one would ever be given these pages to read, especially not the roughly translated quotations of E.T.A. Hoffman. Jason Dodge, according to my thesis, is some kind of a reverse Sandman: he disembowels apparatuses, takes them apart, puts them back together, spreading out machinery like in a diagram, but much more knotty. There is always a warp or twist to it, a deliberate disorder that keeps the parts from ever finding their way back together again. Jason Dodge is a dissector, I allege, and in that, he is equally as ingenious as Drosselmeyer, who makes nutcrackers parade, or the puppet maker Spalanzani, who sands delusions into spectacles as if they had been prescribed.

Jason is completely honest. He says that in the USA, few generally know about all this dark Romanticism. They are not aware of the Sandman figure, not even as it appears in Freud, especially not because of Freud. I do not doubt him; Jason has read every book I bring up in conversation. When he travels, he usually has no camera with him. Christine has it; he has a book of poetry instead. I complained that I had found a song and immediately lost it again. In 1962, the Afro-English singer Cab Kaye gave the astronaut John Glenn a few lines from "Everything Is Go" to take with him when he went up into space: "The rocket is ready to roar/Glenn is in

his place/get set/start off/this smile is heading to space." I subtitled a friend's painting with that refrain because I had no other words at hand, and now those words have been used and are gone. Jason has more of them. He just read a similar such text, a poem by William Carlos Williams written when the Soviet Union sent up Sputnik in 1957. That was exactly fifty years ago today, as I finish this catalogue essay, and one year after the birth of Jason's daughter Cecil. I call Jason, and he has the poem with him. "Did you know that William Carlos Williams' birthday is September 17th, just like mine?" I ask. "And he delivered Robert Smithson into this world," he answers.

In the preface to the book of poetry, I discover a quotation about walking and running, characteristic motifs in Williams' work. It seems to echo a workshop in Antwerp I recently attended, a tribute to the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark. Workshop speakers Suely Rolnik and Hubert Godard how ever didn't say much about art. Instead, they talked about our image of the human body and how it is both reflected and blurred by the media, even wholly contorted. This eventually led to a discussion of Heinrich von Kleist's "On the Marionette Theater" and the bear that no one could hit with a dagger because it steadily watched all the fumbling and awkward maneuvering that preceded the throws and could thus recognize a carefully aimed drive, parrying it with his paw. The bear's is a countenance of awareness that comes from the spine, Godard explained. There were many dancers at the workshop waiting for the practical part of Godard's speech. It never came. They asked how they were supposed to put his words into practice. Godard answered that there is not much to do but raise your focus, look at the space and see yourself in space. "outside - outside myself - there is a world," wrote William Carlos Williams. "And since then, the world is no longer around me, but I am in it," I tell Jason. But Jason has already arrived there long ago, has measured the weather (with a few kilometers of yarn - knotted together or added up - reaching to the clouds). He has multiplied the innumerable facets of a diamond (he taped it to a mirror) and has thrown a solar eclipse like a ball into the wrong part of the calendar - because it is all about keeping the storyline taut, even cutting it off if necessary. As a child, he cut all of the Christmas lights at a mall; the stores went dead, and the season was nothing without its luminous rigging. When Jason breaks something, he destroys it thoroughly. But it does not hurt. Sometimes it gives one the feeling of being snowed into a dead-end street and wanting to be exposed to its unexpected stillness a little longer.

An interruption: there are networks of pathways consisting of duty and responsibility, of work and commitment. One can describe biographies, date books and family trees as routes, but one cannot live in a sociogram instead of a chronicle. We are held down by gravity to the earth and move in cardinal directions. It has been said that Gerhard Richter especially loves his third wife because of her accent. They are both from Dresden, but he has lived and worked as a professor in western Germany for a long time, and it was not until the wall fell that he began hearing young women speaking with a Saxon accent in the Rhineland.

Dresden. For me it is a place under a bridge. My boyfriend left me in order to live with a man. I waited for his call for five days. My sister advised me "throwaway the cell phone; then the waiting will stop". "Toss it into the river", she said, the Elbe perhaps. I calmed down eventually, but the synagogue behind me was still closed, the museum not yet open. A gray-white poster announced the coming exhibition:



paintings by Gerhard Richter. Dresden was only 300 meters long, and all of its doors are closed.

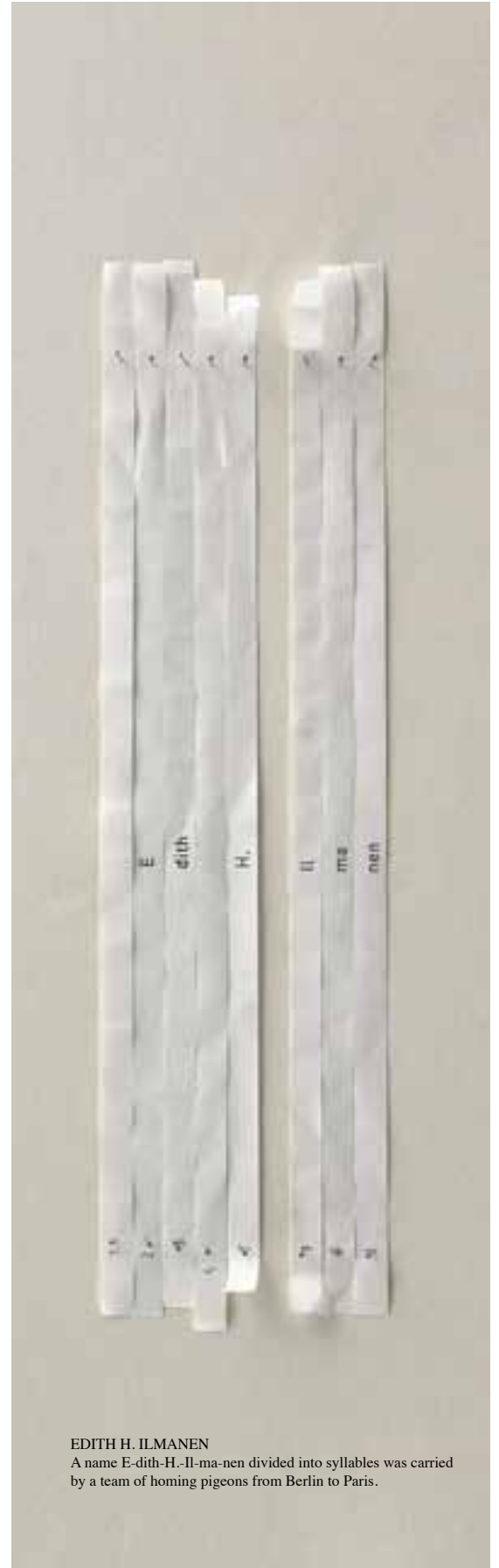
When Christine was not sure whether to be with Jason, he traveled alone to Japan, where a long-planned stay awaited him. Japan was a dismal street that one strolled along alone in the afternoon. A cafe owner took pity on Jason and put his photo album down next to the tea - unsolicited, every day. His family had traveled throughout Europe, America, Asia. There were thousands of photos, all showing the same five people lined up in front of mountains and buildings, bridges and churches.

Japan is not Dresden, but Jason has an expression for the impressions we leave in the world, the dents we inflict on it whether we measure or travel, suffer or read. And I am so fond of listening to his accent. When Jason put a group show together, he titled it with a William Carlos Williams poem. Whoever mentions the exhibition must recite

If I when my wife is sleeping  
and the baby and Kathleen  
are sleeping  
and the sun is a flame-white disc  
in silken mists  
above shining trees,-  
if I in my north room  
dance naked, grotesquely  
before my mirror  
waving my shirt round my head  
and singing softly to myself:  
"I am lonely, lonely,  
I was born to be lonely,  
I am best so!"  
If I admire my arms, my face,  
my shoulders, flanks, buttocks  
against the yellow drawn shades,-

Who shall say I am not  
the happy genius of my household?

The man's limbs dance in the rise and fall of the seven vowels of "household genius." He's in the north room. He has a wife and baby. My home has directions and a weight ever since I have come to know Jason.



EDITH H. ILMANEN  
A name E-dith-H.-Il-ma-nen divided into syllables was carried by a team of homing pigeons from Berlin to Paris.

# JASON DODGE



PROJECT

Street: behind the cliché

Jason Dodge, Darkness Falls on Beroldingerstrasse 7, 79224 Umkirch, 2006  
All of the light bulbs, candles, matches and anything that makes light is taken from a house in a forest in Germany  
Courtesy of Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York

Darkness Falls on Beroldingerstrasse 7, 79224 Umkirch 2006  
Jason Dodge's installations, sculptures and photographs are the result of situations that he creates in connection with everyday life and his personal experience. The objects that he displays often function as traces of earlier actions, in the exhibition space or elsewhere, and instil a paradoxical feeling of presence and absence:  
For Darkness Falls on Beroldingerstrasse 7, 79224 Umkirch, Jason Dodge asked a friend to remove all the objects that emit light including bulbs, candles, matches, etc. from a house located at the edge of the Black Forest in Germany. The objects are loosely laid out on the floor of the gallery, formally evoking art movements such as Land Art or Arte Povera. The work allows us to create our own stories, especially when we consider that it involves a house plunged into darkness and located close to a forest, a situation favourable for intrigues and mysterious stories.

Biography Jason Dodge (Newton, United States, 1969)  
Lives and works in New York City and Berlin

Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art



Jason Dodge  
Installationsansicht von / Installation view of *ars viva 05/06: Identität/Identity*  
KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 25.06. - 20.08.2006  
Photo: Uwe Walter

**ars viva 05/06 - Identität/Identity** Exhibition of the award winners of the Cultural Committee of German Business within the BDI e.V.

**Jason Dodge, Takehito Koganezawa, Michaela Meise, Robin Rhode**

June 25 - August 20, 2006, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, 1st and 2nd Floor

In spring 2005 Jason Dodge, Takehito Koganezawa, Michaela Meise and Robin Rhode were awarded the *ars viva 05/06* prize for art, dealing with the question of "Identity". After exhibitions in Rostock and Antwerp, KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin shows works by the four artists that have partly been conceptualized for this show.

During the past few years all four artists have moved their life and work to Berlin; the show in their new hometown will focus on the impact that Berlin and its artistic and social contexts have on the creative process. How are personal experiences mixed up with conditions one comes across in the new environment and what impact does the city's specific historical situation have on the artistic work? The exhibition highlights works addressing issues related to cultural and Social background, exploring how to define an identity suspended between the Here and the Elsewhere.

**Jason Dodge (born 1969 in Newtown, USA)**

Jason Dodge's installations often reference other, far-away places, people or events. Some few clues - a title, some scattered objects - is all he needs to evoke an image of distant places and people.

At the centre of Jason Dodge's work for KW is a cage housing five homing pigeons. The pigeons originally belonged to the late Joh de Vries, a pigeon breeder who trained them to find their way back to his home in Merkelbeek from distances of up to two thousand kilometres. After Joh de Vries died, his house and loft were sold. The pigeons were given to a friend. Since homing pigeons can only be trained to home once in their lives, the birds would still, if let out of their cage, find their way back to Merkelbeek, to exact the same location where their home once was.

Dodge's works invariably focus the absent. A small label on the wall, for instance, announces the occasional presence among the gallery viewers of a woman who has participated in expeditions to the North and South Pole. However, since she never lifts her incognito, viewers might be standing next to her at any time without ever knowing. In Dodge's works tiny clues open up references to remote locations and give them a presence in the exhibition on a par with the thin scattering of exhibits.

# ARTFORUM

APRIL 2006

## New York

CRITICS' PICKS

Jason Dodge  
CASEY KAPLAN  
525 West 21st Street  
April 21 - May 20

For all that modern amenities such as telephones and airplanes mitigate the difficulties of maintaining long-distance relationships, the miles that separate us from our loved ones can still feel bitterly vast. Leaning on little more than a few rich details and the viewer's imagination, Jason Dodge's latest work deals with this very topic and conjures a Chekhovian sense of drama and narrative besides. "Into Black" (all works 2006), a series of eight monochromatic grayscale photographs, turns out to be the results of "undeveloped photo paper that was exposed for the first time at sunrise on the vernal equinox" in such far-flung locations as Kenya and Greenland. Darkness Falls on Beroldingenstrasse 7, 79224 Umkirch is made up of lightbulbs, candles, and other lighting implements, all loosely arranged in a circle on the floor, which were removed from a house in the Black Forest. Apparently even the refrigerator lamp was taken, and, as with the photographs, the weird story imbues the piece with emotion and intrigue, stirring the imagination. But not every work depends upon background information to prompt a romantic reverie. Bird is a simple device requiring that the viewer rotate a key (one side of which is embellished with the words AUDUBON BIRD CALL) that spins a wheel whose spokes are made of the fingers from a woman's leather glove. Another glove, this one intact, is placed so that the fingers flick it as the wheel turns. The resulting fluttering sound resembles that of a startled bird taking flight, and this sensation acts a connective thread between the works, triggering memories of sudden departures and fantasies of unlikely returns.

—Claire Barliant

*From: Irene Hoffman & Laurence Gateau, eds., Jason Dodge. Newport Beach, Ca & Nice, France:  
Orange County Museum of Art & Villa Arson, 2005, pp. 7 - 13*

## WAITING FOR THE SUN TO SET IN GREENLAND

On February 26, 1973, at 11:30 a.m., artist Maria Nordman created a work at the Newport Harbor Art Museum in Newport Beach, California. This work, titled *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS; OR, THERE ARE NO OCEAN STREETS*,<sup>1</sup> was a built room that opened up to the museum's back alley through the loading dock door. This room was determined by the sun's position at the exact moment of the opening of the show at 11:30 a.m. Using the earth's rotation and the movement of sunlight through the door, Nordman's work created an unexpected and transformative perceptual and social experience accessible to museum visitors who walked out of the building and to those who happened down the alley during the duration of this work. As a "timespecific" work, as the artist calls it, *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS* produces an environment in which the observer's experience is part of the artwork. Preparatory drawings and a few photographs of the installation (which Nordman has stamped "FRAGMENT") remain as documents of this virtually unrecordable work. Now, more than three decades later, Nordman's work has inspired another examination of sunlight and experience in Newport Beach. This new work, an installation by Jason Dodge, serves as the centerpiece of his exhibition at the Orange County Museum of Art, the successor to the Newport Harbor Art Museum.

In conceiving his show for the Orange County Museum of Art, Dodge came across a reference to Nordman's *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS* as he looked back at the museum's early exhibition history. The process of researching this artwork and attempting to locate the few existing details about it was initially frustrating but became increasingly intriguing as each new piece of information and documentation revealed further uncertainties. Not only did Dodge find inspiration in the perceptual disruptions created by *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS*, but in Nordman herself he also found a compelling conceptual ally, an artist who shared his interest in creating works that develop meaning in the experience and imagination of the viewer.

Dodge's *BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND* (2005) delivers an ever-changing experience of light and perception while also revealing his talent as a storyteller and choreographer of objects. With rows of hanging fluorescent lights, *BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND* evokes the patterns of daylight on the western coast of Greenland. As is typical of Dodge's works, we are given very few pieces of information—an enigmatic title that suggests a measure of time and light, reference to a distant location that we've heard of yet have probably never seen, and rows of lights hanging in a gallery that are either on or off depending on the time of day. Meticulously composed details, these elements are just enough to suggest the setting for a larger yet elusive story line, ultimately leading to a narrative of our own invention.

*BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND* references the disorienting period of the year in Greenland when the sun rarely sets. With fluorescent lights hanging from the ceiling and wired to a timer, Dodge's light grid turned on only at the time of sunset in Greenland, presumably the moment when its residents turned on their own lights. Since this work was installed during summer and early fall, at the beginning of the exhibition the light grid was turned off for much of each day, corresponding to some of the

longest periods of daylight in Greenland. As the run of the exhibition extended into the fall, Greenland moved into longer periods of nightfall, resulting in longer periods of light in the gallery. With an ever-changing schedule of light and dark periods in the gallery, this work would be different depending on when a visitor experienced it. At times visitors would see a dark room, at other times they would see a fully lit room, and then there would be those potentially startling moments when a visitor would be standing in the gallery at the moment of sunrise or sunset in Greenland, causing the lights in the gallery to turn off or on accordingly. In both dark and light conditions, an homage to Nordman's *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS* is visible in the room. With a work titled *THE RETURN* (2005), Dodge acknowledges the conceptual and theoretical lineage of his own experiential light installation by presenting the original label for Nordman's installation on the wall in large vinyl text.

The remote geographical references of *BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND* are further developed in an altered world map hanging near Dodge's light grid. This companion work of the same name visually connects the western coast of Greenland and the western coast of the United States in a curious geographic "switch." While at first glance Dodge's intervention is hardly discernible, further examination of the map reveals a careful and subtle alteration that underscores the dramatically differing topographies of these regions. By aligning the vastly different regions of Greenland and Orange County—with their dissimilar populations, climates, and lifestyles—*BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND*'s light grid and altered world map propose reflection on the small details of parallel lives, lived half a world away.

While *BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND* produced an experience impacted by the presence of functioning lights, in a companion exhibition of Dodge's works held at Villa Arson in Nice, France, the presence of light is only suggested, and its effect on the gallery is only hypothetical. In the multiroom exhibition spaces of Villa Arson, Dodge installed *POSSIBILITY OF ROSE COLORED LIGHT* (2004), a work featuring seventy empty fluorescent light fixtures hung from the ceiling in precise rows. The light tubes for these fixtures could be found in different corners of the galleries, some leaning against the walls in groups, others laying on the floor, still in the manufacturer's boxes. Each tube has been covered in a sleeve of dark pink cellophane. Should these tubes be installed in the fixtures, we presume, the room would be cast in a pleasing rose-colored light, the kind of light, as the idiom goes, that can create a deceptively positive view of the world. Unlike the standard commercially produced fixtures used in *BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND*, these fixtures were carefully fabricated from brass and powder-coated steel. Closer inspection of the fixtures, however, reveals that they are not connected to any source of electricity and, in fact, are not even functional but are seductive stand-ins for the real thing. Installed at the time of the 2004 presidential campaign and election in the United States, *POSSIBILITY OF ROSE COLORED LIGHT* was Dodge's seemingly hopeful reflection on the potential for a better outlook on life. And yet, with the light tubes on the floor and simulated fixtures hanging above, it would seem that the possibility for rose-colored light in these rooms is quite remote and can exist only in our imaginations.

These two recent light installations certainly owe much of their conceptual roots to the ephemeral and experiential work of artists such as Maria Nordman, yet with rooms articulated by fluorescent tubes and light fixtures, formally these works are also descendants of Dan Flavin's bold fluorescent light tube installations. Although Dodge's works acknowledge the Minimalist icon, they do so while infusing Flavin's commercially produced materials and straightforward simplicity with enigmatic narrative content, fragments of irony, and elements of fiction and artifice. *BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND* and *POSSIBILITY OF ROSE COLORED LIGHT* reveal Dodge's expert manipulation of objects and spaces, in which every detail is considered and the viewer's imagination is privileged. Each of these large-scale installations is experienced as part of a larger grouping of works that introduce small narrative details such as a character, a condition, an incident, or a location.

As in many of his previous exhibitions, Dodge's Orange County Museum of Art and Villa Arson installations each reference distant and even remote corners of the world, places that we know exist yet probably have never seen. In addition to the western coast of Greenland, other evocative locations include the war-torn country of Sierra Leone and the Gothic city of Antwerp, each suggesting exotic plots and reflection on places and events outside our everyday experience.

A work entitled *THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WICKERFINN LUTZ* invites the possibility for endless story lines played out in many corners of the globe. The postal system and mailroom clerks in cities all over the world were unwitting collaborators in the creation of this work. The piece began when Dodge mailed out nearly one hundred envelopes addressed to a man named Wickerfinn Lutz. Although the address on each envelope is real (they were sent to consulates or embassy offices in dozens of countries), the intended recipient is not. A number of the mailed letters therefore were eventually rerouted and returned to the sender. *THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WICKERFINN LUTZ* is about a search of sorts. This work exists as much in our imaginations—as we envision the vain attempts to locate the elusive Mr. Lutz that took place at each address—as it does in the physical documentation of the search embodied in the returned, undeliverable letters, each one bearing the traces of its futile global journey.

While it is understood (through its label) that *THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WICKERFINN LUTZ* is part fact and part fiction, other works are more ambiguous. With *COMPLETE SOLAR ECLIPSE SIERRA LEONE. OCTOBER 10, 1982* (2004), the boundaries between the real and the unreal are indeterminable. This work features the handwritten itineraries of seventeen people who seem to have traveled to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1982 to view a solar eclipse. The journeys of these seventeen intrepid travelers originated in such cities as Paris, Geneva, Minsk, Perth, Liverpool, and New York. Their travel plans are written on fax paper, pieces of mail, pages of calendars, and personal stationery. As their itineraries reveal, many of them traveled more than twenty-four hours to reach Freetown, with several travelers passing through Lagos, Nigeria, to catch their final connection. One assumes that Sierra Leone was the location that would have provided the optimum or most dramatic view of the October 10 solar eclipse; after all, a grueling pilgrimage to a country plagued by civil war and the dangers of a treacherous diamond trade would not have been without its risks.

A potentially dangerous destination, exotic international itineraries, and a celestial experience shared by converging strangers lend rich narrative possibilities to this work, and yet this collection of otherwise wise banal travel documents begs the question: what exactly are we looking at? Are these in fact the carefully saved notes of global travelers who made a journey to the same distant destination more than twenty years ago? And, if so, how did Dodge possibly assemble them? These uncertainties lead to questions, not only about the work's "authenticity" but also, more importantly, about Dodge's position in this piece. Was the artist the collector of these itineraries,

seeking them out through unknown means for their ultimate inclusion in this work? Or, in the more likely scenario, was he the maker of these itineraries, a skillful forger of handwriting and manipulator of materials? Both possibilities seem equally absorbing. As in many of Dodge's works, his position relative to this work remains wonderfully unresolved. Ultimately we are left considering whether, if these itineraries were in fact "faked," as logic might dictate, the very event necessitating these supposed travels was even real.

A similar line of questioning is elicited by the materials and implied actions in *YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE* (2004) and *THE INESCAPABLE WEIGHT OF REFLECTIONS* (2005). A one-kilo silver bar issued by Credit Suisse lying on the floor of a gallery at Villa Arson is the surprising antagonist in *YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE*. Shards of glass on the floor and a nearby broken window, haphazardly repaired with brown packaging tape, suggested how the suspicious bar might have gotten there. A two-carat diamond taped to a mirrored wall in a gallery at the Orange County Museum of Art becomes the curious focal point of *THE INESCAPABLE WEIGHT OF REFLECTIONS*. A small piece of paper on the floor provides the details of its purchase months earlier in Antwerp's diamond market. Captivating objects, a bar of silver bullion and a round-cut diamond become alluring agents of intrigue, catalysts in interrupted narratives that seem yet to be fully played out. As these works articulate, what is absent in Dodge's works often carries as much weight as what he has so carefully made present.

Evidence of a curious act of vandalism and a mysterious foreign shopping trip, these engaging tableaux combine the fictive and the real, bearing enigmatic traces of human presence and past events. Questions and intriguing incongruities dominate our reading of these works. In *YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE*, a window has been broken and provisionally repaired, yet evidence of its destruction still remains on the gallery floor. Who are we to believe carried out this prank, and what was the intent? This strange tableau and its enigmatic title both direct our imagination to the circumstances and events that led up to this scene. With a mirror, a diamond, and some tape, *THE INESCAPABLE WEIGHT OF REFLECTIONS* sets up an arrangement that elicits any number of questions about where the diamond came from, its authenticity, and the story behind its purchase. The mirrored surface and clear tape highlight the diamond's form on the wall while underscoring the peculiarity of its very presence and its seemingly haphazard placement. With three very different materials that each function very differently in the world, *THE INESCAPABLE WEIGHT OF REFLECTIONS* presents an evocative merging of incongruous materials and economies.

Ambiguities continue to surface in *ABOVE THE WEATHER* (2005). Spools of wire, string, cable, clothesline, and other materials that are measured in lengths lie in a colorful pile on the floor of the gallery. As Dodge's label proposes, if each of these lengths were to be tied together, it would equal thirteen kilometers, the height of the troposphere, an elevation "above the weather." The potential yet improbable task inherent in this accumulation underscores Dodge's interest in manipulating logic and his delight in leading the imagination toward the impossible or the unexpected. Perhaps these triggers to the imagination are the magic of Dodge's work. Like Maria Nordman's installation photos stamped *FRA MENT* or the sun's faint halo during a solar eclipse, Dodge's works give us only parts of a larger picture. The conclusions to the narratives activated by his compelling scenarios are ours to devise and are bounded only by the limits of our imaginations.

IRENE HOFMANN

# WHERE IS WICKERFINN LUTZ?

*Gallagher  
McCarthy  
Sala*

73

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WICKERFINN LUTZ (2004), by Jason Dodge, takes a disarmingly simple approach. The artist sent letters to Wickerfinn Lutz, a person of his own invention, to a number of addresses in various countries. Since this person does not exist, neither there nor here, many letters were returned to the artist and their contents remain a mystery. However, for as long as there is a mailman out there looking for such a person, he may exist after all, even if only in the mailman's imagination. And what about the letters that were not returned to the sender? Did they actually reach an addressee of the same name or did they get lost in a game that was doomed from the start? And when will the story end, what is the ultimate goal?

For the presentation of this piece at Villa Arson in Nice, Dodge made a tableau of selected letters that had been returned to their sender. The envelopes show traces of the journeys they have been through, illustrating the distance between sender and fictive addressee, which corresponds, in turn, to the real distance between the artist and the fictive viewer.

The futility of corresponding with an imaginary person in a venture that undergoes varying degrees of concreteness recalls the adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha. In Cervantes' satire on the romances of his time, the hero, blinded by the very literature the writer parodies, believes that he is engaging in extraordinary adventures with dark powers in

his dealings with the mundane paraphernalia of everyday life, such as windmills, to name the most famous example. The "Knight of the Sad Face," as Don Quixote calls himself, lives entirely in a fiction of his own making, in a parallel literary world of heroic epics and amorous adventures, a world that has now sunk into almost complete oblivion. But Don Quixote succumbs to that world heart and soul; he is prepared to suffer all for the sake of honoring his great love Dulcinea, whom he has never seen face to face-for she, too, is of his own invention.

The seemingly haphazard search for Wickerfinn Lutz proves to symbolize the search for a protagonist per se, but this protagonist is no longer a fiction of the viewer's imagination. He exists, if at all, in the imagination of an emissary, an agent of both artist and viewer, namely, the mailman. The artist keeps receiving letters from all corners of the world, from China, Israel, U.S.A., France ... The possibilities are legion; every country is open to the escapee protagonist and, as an escapee, he is related to-although entirely different from-figures, like Anders Contrave, that crop up in Dodge's earlier work.

How concrete can parallel universes be? The visual fragments that Dodge lays out in exhibition spaces, where they are loosely interrelated, yield scenarios of a casual, and yet disturbing, artificiality. We are familiar with the objects of use that communicate the presence of human beings and offer clues to a narrative. Dodge's double exhibition, "Anders Contrave: Part I" (Basel, 1999) and "Anders Contrave: Part 2, Your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together is what made me love you and broke both our hearts" (Stockholm, 1999), is based on ideas that can not be read as linear developments but as accumulations. Dilapidated, aloof

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JASON DODGE, "ANDERS CONTRAVE: PART 2," 1999  
*exhibition view, Moderna Museet Projekt, Stockholm /  
 Ausstellungsansicht.*

PHOTOS: ANNA KLEBERG / CASEY KAPLAN GALLERY, NEW YORK

tableaus exert a fascination, allowing viewers to take up the thread of the story and elaborate on it wherever they please. The portrait of Anders Contrave is hanging on an abandoned, semi-trashed Basel trade fair stand. The tennis clothes of a mysterious woman with the monogram SQ lie scattered about in the old rectory of the Moderna Museet, which has been converted into an exclusive tennis court. The exclusive ambiance, in which elements of luxury living and corporate design blend into a referential fabric of style and culture, does not provide the backdrop but rather a situation in which all of the details can be read as indexical signs: a narrative arranged and produced only for the sake of the viewer.

Taking a conceptual approach, these props speak of consumption, of products and their design. But as an ensemble, they speak of passion and unrequited love, hence conveying the image of an enigmatic pro-

tagonist. Polish and emotions mingle; we enter a moral maelstrom. The air is filled with inconsequential, everything is accidental, as if casually cast about. Can a story even exist within an object? Or conversely, aren't the traces of a story attached to things? And don't plots develop by the way in which things relate to each other? The levels of these stories overlap and mutually determine each other. Within the glamorous framework of invented labels, Dodge plays out his precise sense of design on the semantic level of language in stories that he stages, with great devotion to detail, using exquisitely faked found objects. All of the familiar items of daily life (including bed linens) every important aspect of these narratives is constructed, from monogram to furniture. Dodge invests his world with life and logic, all his invented details walking the fine line between reality and satire. His objects are aesthetically charged items of use that mirror cultural contexts. Under the surface, notions of value come to play: aesthetic values with moral implications are pitted against status symbols, flaunting top-of-the-line materials and manufacturing excellence. Juxtaposed with a contrasting scenario of cheap, flimsy disposables, the protagonists reside in a social limbo of conspicuously exclusive luxury. The viewers have come too late and they don't belong there anyway. As uninvited guests, all they can do is rummage through the remains looking for the ruins of the moment.

The charming distraction of these works is buoyed by the emotional state of their absent actors and invites viewers to attempt a "forensic" reconstruction as Nancy Spector remarks in her catalogue essay on the exhibition, "Anders Contrave: Part 2." But now the viewer has to endure definitions. The stage has become a dictionary, an encyclopedia, to which Dodge plans to add new components with every successive exhibition. Fictional logic is just as good as any other. The use of dialogue makes especially conspicuous the potential and the friction that mark the relationship between supposedly objective connotation and subjective associations. Direct sensual experience, subjective perception, and the reality of social intercourse and aesthetic discourse provide the wherewithal for an exciting exchange,

comparable to the conflict between Don Quixote, blinded by literature, and the unfortunate Sancho Panza, who tries in vain to communicate his reality.

In this respect, Dodge's works can be interpreted as reflections on the negotiability of art and reality. By activating the imagination, he generates a simultaneous existence somewhere else in the world and invites viewers to unite incompatibles inasmuch as every narrative rests on one essential prerequisite: the purposeful waiver of possible doubts.

How convincing does an object have to be, how authentic does it have to look, to make us believe in the mock up-and-join Don Quixote in chasing after windmills? For the exhibition "Formalismus. Moderne Kunst, heute" (2004) at the Hamburger Kunstverein, Jason Dodge created an installation cryptically entitled 12. OCT. 1982. It consisted of a number of brass ash tray objects placed around the venue (memories of sixties corporate design), as if he had simply lifted and recycled elements from Donald Judd's stack sculptures. Obviously they could not be used as ashtrays despite their provocatively convenient placement.

The installation POSSIBILITY OF ROSE COLORED LIGHT (2004) in the Villa Arson, Nice, consists of seventy brass lamps for fluorescent lighting evenly distributed on the ceiling of the gallery, in addition to the regular lighting. The lamps look perfectly functional although they are not wired. Two stacks of neon tubes are propped against the wall next to cardboard boxes; they are wrapped in pink film, ready to bathe the gallery in "rose colored light." But only the viewer's inner eye can peer through the proverbial rose-colored glasses; it takes individual effort, to imagine this white room suffused with a pink glow. One senses a certain melancholy and possibly even resignation, which might be interpreted as sarcastic, given a political reading of the work. The exhibition opened on November 1, 2004, the day that George W. Bush was reelected, and a time when the United States viewed France as the spearhead of "old Europe," as the representative of a decadent system attempting to obstruct irrepressible progress. The potential of rose colored illumination might then be read as a pun, an ironic critique of oversimplification and repressive black-and-white thinking.

COMPLETE SOLAR ECLIPSE SIERRA LEONE 1982 (2004) lists the traveling day of fictional, but unnamed, people who set out from different places to watch the eclipse of the sun that took place in Sierra Leone in 1982. This natural event, which occurs with no ulterior motive, is the point of departure for a collective experience.. against the background of a particularly horrific civil war, which made the African country extremely unsafe at the time. The arduous journey to this exotic and dangerous place in order to witness a natural event indicates that the ignorant enthusiasts were only interested in the shared experience, in a natural spectacle that lies beyond moral categories, beyond cruelty, brutality, and murder. But the eclipse is not entirely without dangers of its own: if you look at it directly, your eyesight will be permanently damaged. The eclipse can therefore be seen only through a filter, a blackened pane of glass, or a special film. In this exotic and especial context, the question arises as to where the artist's invention actually begins and where it ends, if it ends at all-and does it necessarily have to end in the reality in which we happen to be? Couldn't the artist have equipped his invented viewers with abilities that

*JASON DODGE, YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE, 2004,  
1 kilo silver bullion, window, Villa Arson, Nice, France.*





would allow them to gaze directly at the sun? Or could his fiction have quietly coped with a country crippled by civil war? Dodge's piece is a puzzle, a convoluted, impenetrable allegory of art and society.

PERPETUAL LIGHT (BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND) (2005) might be seen as a counterpoint to these two works; it establishes an exchange between sunlight and artificial light in two different geographical locations. Standard commercial neon lights have been mounted in rows at the Orange County Museum as if in an ordinary factory. When the sun sets in Nuuk, Greenland, the lights come on in the Orange County Museum, and they go out again at sunrise. Since Nuuk is so close to the Arctic circle, the light changes dramatically in the course of the exhibition so that viewers who see the exhibition at different times will have entirely different memories of it. The work can therefore be extended into an imaginary dialogue between two visitors who saw the piece at different times.

The idea of different worlds and their parallel existence resembles the attempt to understand things that go beyond logical explanation. Regardless of where we happen to be at the moment, somewhere else in the world masses of people are jumping out of bed and hurrying off to work while, somewhere else,



the lights are going out. In the installation YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE (2004), a one-kilogram bar of silver is lying on the floor in a pool of splintered glass; the broken pane through which it was thrown is still in its frame. Dodge has reversed the concept of theft, in general, and art theft, in particular: instead of violently removing something of value, he has added something in an act of inverted vandalism. That could almost be a viable definition of art. But who would do something like that? It was probably Wickerfinn Lutz, and the artist is trying to give the bar of silver back to him. But that's only conjecture; I wasn't there.

*(Translation: Catherine Schelbert)*



**November 6 - 13, 2003  
Issue 423**

**Jason Dodge, "Mercury Vapor  
Lamp & a Month of Sundays"**

**Casey Kaplan, through Sat 8  
(see Chelsea)**

An instance of "inevitable monotonous repetition": That is the official explanation for the inclusion of "a Month of Sundays" in the title of Jason Dodge's new show. (Note to dealers: Don't leave yourselves open to easy derision by including phrases in your press release whose hyperseriousness borders on the absurd.)

Lovers of contemporary art have all experienced the repetition to which this gallery statement refers—first in the guise of Minimalism, and then Postminimalism. Dodge colors his reiterative enterprise (a combination send-up of and homage to both movements) in the wan browns, blues and off-whites of 1970s polyester leisure suits and modular furniture. A facsimile of a late-1960s Braun radio sets the tone of a nascent high-tech culture, the object's literal emptiness a nod to the vacuity of the era that gave rise to Minimalism and its offshoots.

More than anything else, Dodge's I works resemble three-dimensional versions of the margin drawings of a disaffected design student in a required art history course. Donald Judd's precision box sculptures become ashtrays and umbrella stands; metal poles seemingly wedged between floor and ceiling recall the sublime tension of Fred Sandback's yarn, here rendered in an atrophied state. A Dan Flavin tribute, however, lays bare the queasy relationship between Dodge and his forefathers with such visual and verbal acuity that one can only tip one's hat in appreciation. On the floor lies a box containing two fluorescent tubes, a pair of sun goggles and a printed message that reads "Complete Solar Eclipse Siera [sic] Leone 1992," cloaking the show's oedipal complex in a brilliantly sardonic metaphor of blindness. Humorous or not—saves the day.

-Noah Chasin



Jason Dodge, "Mercury Vapor Lamp & a Month of Sundays," installation view, 2003

**Jason Dodge**

c/o - Atle Gerhardsen, Berlin

Jason Dodge's recent solo exhibition demonstrated again that he is a clever imitator, an expert illusionist with the sharp eye and deft hands common to conjurers. If he wanted to make a forgery of a Duchamp ready-made he could, although he prefers to make his own sculptural inquiries into the quotidian and the phantasmagorical. Strung out from one side of the gallery to the other and carefully plugged in at both ends, Microphone 2 and 3 (all works 2002) is an elegant web of simulated directional microphones which insinuate that everything that takes place beneath them could be on public record. It's uncomfortable to look at an artwork that expects a verbal reaction while someone could be listening in on the other end of the wire. The fact that on closer scrutiny the mikes are just good dummies

made of, among other things, alloy thimbles, puts a smile on your face. Nearby a room-dividing screen of cord and white tape, String Wall, and a large black Mobile, part chocolate grinder and part Alexander Calder, evoke the spirit and style of a public venue where good citizens might congregate and where the spot-lit presence of things that vaguely resemble High Modern international art are intended to convey an impression of worldliness.

The unifying idea of Dodge's exhibition 'Milton Keynes New City' was to turn the gallery into a generic regional cultural centre in no particular place some time after the 1970s. The real Milton Keynes - incidentally the backdrop to Cliff Richard's music video *Wired for Sound* (1981) is the largest of a number of Britain's designated 'new towns' with its own 'master plan'; a development with a grid of streets and a shopping centre heart. It wasn't so much based on a radical utopian vision - like Le Corbusier's 50-year-old vertical village La Cite Radieuse, Marseille - as a pragmat-

ic, horizontal and well-meant solution to overwhelming public housing lists. Exhibitions, like planned communities, generally aim to be well laid out, clean and orderly. Dodge's Broken Window, a piece of wilful vandalism patched up with orange tape, ruined the view of the river as a reminder that one model will never fit all, and that in self-policing environments a bit of smartarsed random action is rarely out of place.

Dodge's plain but curious objects and installations often flirt with combinations of the familiar and uncanny. Robbed or stripped of origin, function and purpose, his assortments of replicas are reduced in a gesture of subtle irony to the sum total of their material qualities, their styling, a summation of details and the interplay of surfaces and textures. But his project doesn't stop with post-Pop commodity critique or arguments about style versus function and the attendant value judgements. His works also delve into the realm of fiction. In this show, tucked around a corner was *Vodka and Grass* (Fluxus Picnic), which consists of plastic lawn clippings sandwiched between transparent plastic sheets on which could be found

a Buenos Aires peace dove, Moscow Olympic coasters, empty glasses and an almost empty bottle of vodka beneath another pile of mikes. The question 'Who could have done this and why?' lingers, while the work resists any clear-cut narrative or the possibility of an answer.

It's as if Dodge sits on a fence and looks across on one side to the surplus produced by the world of commerce and on the other to a similar surplus produced within the niche market based on the exchange of intangibles and constantly renegotiated values called art. His work suggests that over time both these surpluses sediment in the same way and same place in the collective mind. A series of poster-sized black and white images including *Time Capsule Image - Block Building* and *Time Capsule Image - Jai-alai* shows how he extracts meaning from this sediment and, much like a recycling plant, uses our communal rubbish as inspirational raw ingredients for his beguiling-materializations

Dominic Eichler

Jason Dodge's plain but curious objects and installatoinis flirt with combinations of the familiar and the uncanny.



**Jason Dodge**  
"Milton Keynes  
New City"  
2002  
Installation View

# The New York Times

## ART IN REVIEW

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2000

### Jason Dodge

Casey Kaplan Gallery  
48 Greene Street  
SoHo  
Through Feb. 11

Here's a worthwhile goal for the young, Conceptually inclined artist who is as taken with materials as ideas: Make objects that don't have to be explained by your art dealer. The art dealer in this case did an admirable job with Mr. Dodge's second solo show and its scatterings of familiar objects in unusual combinations and materials, the most engaging of which is an Artschwagerian Ping-Pong table made of real tigerwood. But the gap between seeing and hearing, between what comes from the work directly and what is attributed to it, remains. In fact, it may have widened since Mr. Dodge's debut two years ago.

The theme here is the good life and its vacuousness as reflected in the accoutrements of a fictional palace hotel in France, arranged in five tableaux. Each signals a kind of absence, and there is the intimation of a failed romance in the show's long, wistful telegram-like title. A group of unblemished folding chairs adorned with impeccably mono-

grammed silk cushions conjures underattended symposiums in the hotel ballroom. Nearby a pair of sunbathing pads with pillows covered in Burberry plaid are reserved for the absent lovers. A lion skin scattered with candies and cigarettes, a custom-made garment bag and a down comforter spilling out of its monogrammed paper wrapper, suggests a hurried dressing for dinner. Trees, wrapped and unwrapped, fake and real, lurk in corners. And finally, the exotic Ping-Pong table is littered with half-full glasses floating with cigarette stubs, as if whoever-they-are have finally arrived, partied and moved on.

One needs to be told that Mr. Dodge has made or had made nearly all of these objects, which intensifies the aura of commodity fetishization with something more personal. They reflect an artist who is moral, exorbitantly skilled and very smart, but who needs to move beyond his understated fusion of Robert Gober and Neo Geo. It's fine to cast the viewer as a detective, but the clues should be more fun to look at.

ROBERTA SMITH

26.8 – 24.10 1999

# MODERNA MUSEET PROJEKT

JASON DODGE



Installation i Prästgården med modell/Installation in Prästgården including model, 1999, blandteknik/mixed media

## INTRODUCTION

For Moderna Museet Projekt the artist Jason Dodge transformed the former assembly room in Prastgarden (the old vicarage), adjacent to Moderna Museet, into a court for a luxurious variation of badminton. More visual than functional, it provided a space for a narrative where both beginning and end are not only unknown but also uncertain, and where alienation and elegance are being combined to shape a beautiful union. The title of the installation is Anders Contrave, part 2, your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together is what made me love you and broke both of our hearts. In addition to the court, it included chairs and other props as well as live elements on the opening-day, such as a photo-model wearing the same sport ensemble as that in the installation. Anders Contrave, part 1, which was shown in June 1999 at Art Basel, was reminiscent of a fair booth in which various practical and decadent objects had been left behind from the previous fair.

Jason Dodge's beautifully executed sculptural installations oscillate between the known and the unknown. He may combine borrowed logotypes with invented ones, much like a techno DJ mixes appropriated music with original versions. The signs Jason Dodge uses are mostly from 20th century design history, for example, Karel Marten's telephone card and the logotype for the Swiss Expo of 1964, and they often allude to these seductive qualities of design, contrasted with the kind of design that appears on tickets, in grocery stores and other places where carefully considered design is less expected. He has even made his own design for the 500 Euro note. His designs can recall memories of a specific event or evoke the mood or atmosphere of a particular period of time. In this way the familiar is given a new context, which in its turn lead to many new meanings where both a collective memory and the viewer's personality play important roles.

Anders Contrave is the name of the fictive enterprise Jason Dodge uses as a model for how exoticism can function. In a previous exhibition in the gallery Casey Kaplan in New York in May 1998, journeys of discovery composed the model for exoticism. In both cases our expectations of a certain culture or subject area are focused upon - how these expectations are satisfied or contradicted. In Anders Contrave, parts 1 and 2, even Europe and the European cultural heritage, including aristocracy and royalty, can be seen as exotic. And as so often in this artist's work, here too we find absurd and cruel elements, and a high emotional temperature in the set tableaux.

MARIA LIND

## Jason Dodge: Exquisite Acts of Cruelty

Scenario I: Basel

Weeks have passed since the end of the fair. Since it was now the off-season for trade shows, there was no immediate imperative to remove the left-over display items, the residual effects of



Installation i Prästgården med modell/Installation in Prästgården including model, 1999, blandteknik/mixed media

yet another comm-rcial exposition. Yet, it was odd that no one had returned to retrieve the slick merchandising system used to promote Anders Contrave, the multi-national, neo-European corporation that so dominated its competitors at the fair. Its white and yellow display barrier of molded plastic, graced with strips of netting, remains in place - only now delineating an empty space. Vinyl sheeting and other elements from the information kiosk lie folded in a heap on the floor. The company logo - a silhouette of a swan inscribed within an attenuated oval - still hangs on the wall accompanied by a portrait of Mr. Contrave himself, sporting his signature bow tie, trim moustache, and frameless glasses: his benevolent smile assuring prospective customers of product excellence and quality control. But stranger still are the remnants from some seemingly afterhours tryst: bedding from the Continental Savoy Hotel discarded lingerie and plumed silk wrap, half-drunk morning orange juice, and a half-smoked pack of cigarettes. The pillowcase and shawl - both monogrammed with the initials "SO" in a luxuriously curving script - suggest that their owner resides at the Savoy - one of her many homes away from home. The pieces of crumpled hotel stationery littering the bed represent her rejected attempts to pen an afterthought, a coldly polite but emphatic adieu. It remains a mystery whether the completed letter was ever sent.

Scenario 1/: Stockholm

The games must have just ended. The badminton court - sized for singles only - is empty, but

the changing area is strewn with a woman's reguldion white clothing, Adidas sneakers, and worn panties, along with her racket and shuttlecock. Once again, the monogram "SO" appears; here it is inscribed, white on white, on the badminton skirt. An empty Parmalat orange juice container, cigarettes, and



extra towels lie among a few, casually placed, potted plants. Folding wooden chairs, with White slip covers embroidered with white shuttlecocks, lie in disarray in both the lady's changing room and on the court. The event - whether a tournament or an informal competition - seems to have been left in haste. It is unclear if the recreation site was so hastily abandoned because something unpleasant occurred or because the female player - whose forsaken belongings bespeak a swift departure - had some place far more enticing to go after the game.

Scene of the Crime. A Fiction of Style

These two tableaux - each 'alluding to some oddly familiar state of mind through an ever elusive narrative - constitute Jason Dodge's recent Anders Contrave project. Spread over two solo exhibitions, a presentation at the Basel

Art Fair and a site-specific installation created for Prastgarden (the old vicarage) used by the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Anders Contrave tells a story of exoticism, nostalgia, and desire. Unlike conventional narrative, which relies on linear development to communicate a plot line, Dodge constructs his sculptural fictions through assemblages of quotidian objects, fabricated situations, and recognizable elements of design. His installations function like stage sets, empty, save for props and the abbreviated architectural codes that signify specific lifestyles, geographic locations, and historical periods. Whilst the actors are absent, their presence is intimated through an assortment of accouterments that begins to d scribe who they might be and what they have done. Dodge's aesthetic is a forensic one. His tableaux are composed of clues and traces of past events; they invite the inquisitive mind, the voyeuristic sleuth, to reconstruct what might have happened and to whom. Casting his viewer in the role of detective, Dodge creates beautifully crafted and seductive crime scenes that inhabit the past tense. What this viewer encounters are relics from a history of previous occurrences, emotional acts, and impassioned misdeeds.

As is the case with forensic evidence, separate items, no matter how insignificant, only take on meaning through their relationship with and proximity to other such objects. A lipstick-stained cigarette, a crumpled letter, a half-consumed container of orange juice, worn and discarded underwear, and a tumbled chair become the narrative components of a story waiting to be told. Making an analogy between the composite nature of his work and "sampling" - the DJ art of mixing disparate music sources into a mosaic of sound - Dodge explains that the "relationship between elements is where the meaning lies." Until the pieces of the puzzle are brought together into a coherent image, the signifying faculty of each component lies dormant. Nevertheless, every aspect of the artist's installations radiates with potential, with content waiting to be deciphered. But Dodge complicates the situation beyond the already enticingly cryptic nature of his enterprise by deliberately introducing a layer of subterfuge. Extending the metaphorical and tactical references to the scene of the crime here, it can be said that the artist perpetrates his work through deception and visual betrayal.

An astute student of the history of design, Dodge invents and fabricates his own products, logos, and fashion

items by freely mixing well-known and, in some cases, classic designs. A brochure he issued at the premiere of *Anders Contrave*, for instance, inventories concepts behind the work, many of which are simply corporations recognized for their design achievements: Gucci, Citroen, IBM, Louis Vuitton, Braun, Knoll International, Ericsson, and Olivetti, among others. Having once fashioned his own version of the new EEC currency for an earlier exhibition, Dodge appropriates and reconstitutes society's most choice commercial forms. Nothing is sacred under his discerning eye. In this exhibition project, the fabricated items - such as the Parmalat orange juice, the Continental Savoy of New Delhi, Innsbruck stationery and linens, and the packs of Shepherd cigarettes - are all vaguely recognizable. In fact, there is an uncanny quality in their familiarity. But since they are total inventions, they oscillate provocatively between reality and fiction. To further obscure the matter, Dodge also includes already existing objects. In an earlier work, a Nokia cell phone made an appearance; here real Adidas sneakers share



*Anders Contrave, del 2/part 2, your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together*  
is what made me love you and broke both our hearts, blandteknik/mixed media, Moderna Museet Projekt, Prästgården 1999



*Anders Contrave, del 2/part 2*

the space with fantasy commodities in a hybridized environment of readymades and fabrications. Parmalat, while being a packager of milk products and tomato sauce, does not, in fact, distribute orange juice. And *Anders Contrave*, the corporate umbrella under which the two-part project situates itself, is a complete fantasy (granted, Dodge borrowed the name from Oerlikon Contraves, a multinational Zurich-based corporation specializing in the development, production, sale, and technical support of weapon systems for gun and missile-based air defense).

But in its incarnation as the binding element of the artwork, *Anders Contrave* - its profile, identity, and function - remains a mystery. The name and logo, which Dodge has insidiously crafted and even woven into the plastic packing materials used in Basel, conjure up well-known international corporate identities: Merrill Lynch, Hewlett Packard, Daimler Benz, Conde Nast. One feels in the presence of a powerful, blue-chip, financial entity whose brand - whatever that may be plays a homogenizing role in global economies. Wherever you are in the world, *Anders Contrave*, will serve you.

Dodge has always been interested in how the fictions of style can dictate meaning. As he 'explains it, his entire praxis has involved "creating a narrative just through style." Mining the worlds of fashion, film, popular music, industrial design, graphic design, and architecture, Dodge

emulates stylistic icons that signify aspects of our cultural value system. What does it mean for instance, that all over the world, women of means are carrying Fendi baguettes or wearing Gucci boots) What did Raymond Lowey's streamlined designs for everything from telephones to ocean liners say about modernism's utopian vision? How will Microsoft's Windows icons affect the way future generations comprehend visual data? By confiscating and blending diverse styles - the Mercedes Benz font for the Anders Contrave logo, for instance, Dodge is not staging a critique of corporate culture. Rather, he is embracing the way brand identities or stylistic trends function as contemporary mythologies in the sense put forward by Roland Barthes, who analyzes "collective representations as sign systems" in order to "account in detail for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature." The universalizing phenomenon of style fascinates Dodge and the idea of it permeates his work. In describing this social and cultural reality, he pondered the fact that just about anyone could smoke the same brand of cigarettes as Gwyneth Paltrow, thus sharing in or, at least, approximating the glamour associated with her.

## Exoticism of the Other

In this exhibition project, Dodge alludes to the homogenizing trends engulfing the European Union since its official inauguration in Maastricht in 1992. The presence of Anders Contrave in both Basel and Stockholm as a uniform corporate entity, despite the innate cultural and social differences between the two cities, betokens the inevitable outcome of centralization. Although the two shows took place sequentially, Dodge imagined them occurring simultaneously, which would only have underscored the equivalency of experience that he was orchestrating. When encountered from within, a trend or lifestyle is seductive and all-encompassing (hence its mythic capabilities), but when witnessed from afar, it appears foreign, exotic, and Other. According to Dodge, even Europe, the very locus of Western civilization, can be exoticized when examined from a distance. And in Anders Contrave, he turns his telescopic lens on the new European Union just to prove his point.

In his exhibition brochure text, Dodge proposes a metaphor for the exotic situation of exoticism that he is exploring in the two installations, which involves Josephine Baker, the African-American vaudeville performer who became the toast of 1920s Paris, and Adolf Loos, the Austrian architect whom she commissioned to design her home. This portion of his conceptual inventory reads: "Adolf Loos in conversation with Josephine Baker - Josephine Baker reclines in a day bed - Adolf Loos sits in a small wooden chair of his design." A study in opposites - the outrageous Baker who danced nude at the Folies-Bergere and owned her own nightclub, which she supervised with a pet leopard, and the prim Loos, who specialized in cloistered interior spaces - provides the perfect scenario for the exoticizing gaze. Baker played this gaze as her trump card, and the new house would reflect the voyeurism at the heart of her professional success. Loos's design for her includes a grand, double-height, indoor swimming pool with entry on the second story. The first level contains a glass-paneled walkway that would provide windows onto the depths of the pool so that visitors could observe Baker frolicking underwater. According to architectural theorist Beatriz Colomina, the house is premised on the act of looking. "But between this gaze and its object," she explains, "... is a screen of glass and water, which renders the body inaccessible. The swimming pool is lit from above, by a skylight, so that inside it the windows would reappear as reflective surfaces, impeding the swimmer's view of the visitors standing in the passages. This view is the opposite of the panoptic view of a theater box, corresponding, instead, to that of a peephole, where subject and object cannot simply exchange glances." For Dodge, this architectural embodiment of voyeurism - a classic example of 20th-century European design - is the perfect analogue to his current study of Europe as exoticized Other.



Anders Contrave, del 2 / part 2

## A Tale of Unrequited Love

But this is only half the story. Dodge's art unfolds to reveal different but related layers of meaning. His sculptural mis-en-scenes in both Basel and Stockholm are narrative structures waiting to be decoded. Though elusive, each staged scenario suggests a very specific ambience of old-world decadence and faded elegance. The monogrammed hotel linens and plumed stole invoke an era of steamer trunks, transatlantic cruise ships, and prohibition night clubs. Badminton itself was once an upper-class activity, introduced to England around 1873 through its colonial outposts in India. During its heyday in the 1930s, the game was embraced by Hollywood celebrities such as Ginger Rogers, Claudette Colbert and Bette Davis. Joan Crawford was supposedly so enamored of badminton that she would play on rainy days wearing only a bathing suit. In 1934, the International Badminton Federation was established, and national championships were held in nine countries including Sweden. Perhaps Dodge's installation in Stockholm intentionally references this period, evoking nostalgia as yet another stylistic ploy. The subtitles he assigns to works within the Anders Contrave installations hint at possible plot developments and provide evidence for character motivation. The Basel piece composed of bedding and a woman's intimate belongings is titled, she wanted to convince him not to love her, and the entire Stockholm installation bears the subtitle, your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together is what

made me love you C)nd broke both our hearts.

As impossible as it is to determine who the mysterious "SO" might be - or whether, in fact, it is even one person - the female character is clearly in the business of breaking hearts. One can imagine an unrivaled beauty who goes to exquisite lengths to torture her various lovers, who all return for more emotional abuse. Her cruelty and indifference are part of the attraction. Dodge offers this glimpse of unrequited love less for narrative effect than as yet another example of universal experience - hence his proposal that the Basel and Stockholm installations be construed as simultaneous events. "SO," therefore, becomes an idea, an emblem for the melancholy of unfulfilled desire. In this light, Anders Contrave emerges as a landscape of emotional desolation, a terrain across which every person at one point in his or her life will travel. By articulating the sadness of style, Dodge has achieved one of his primary aesthetic and conceptual goals: to be able, at the end of the century, to create a work of art that can make someone cry.

– NANCY SPECTOR



*Anders Contrave, del 1/part 1, 1999, blandteknik/ mixed media*



*She is kissing just for practice, 1999, blandteknik/ mixed media*



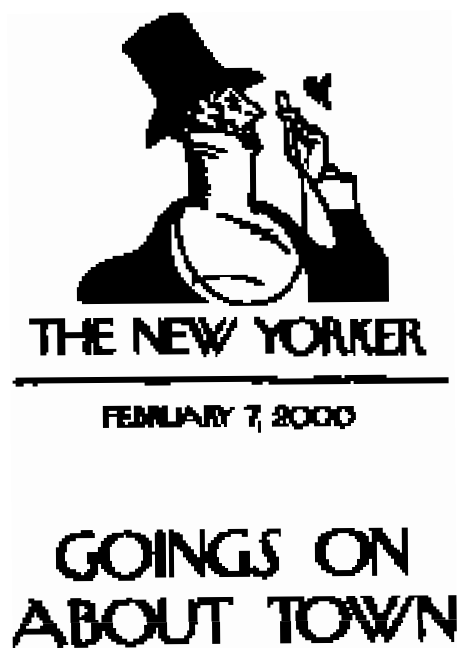
*Anders Contrave, del 1/part 1 she wanted to convince her not to love her, 1999, blandteknik/ mixed media*



*Anders Contrave, del 1/part 1 Information Stand, 1999, blandteknik/ mixed media*

**GALERIE  
ALLEN**





JASON DODGE –Walking into this show, you may feel as though you’ve stumbled into a scene from “Last Year at Marienbad.” Five sculptural installations, all set in a fictional palace hotel in France, present traces of recent activity—a zebra wood Ping-Pong table strewn with abandoned glasses, a lion’s skin littered with mints, receipts, and Hope cigarettes. But the object of desire, presumably a woman, is conspicuously absent. There’s a seductive elegance to the objects, but the obsession with life style (Burberry plaid on su bathing cushions) smacks of art for the Wallpaper generation. Through Feb. 12. (Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131.)

**Gregory Williams on a  
misguided ornithologist**

Jason Dodge, Helsinki, Casey Kaplan  
Gallery, **New York**

If Modernism's legendary tug-of-war between form and function were to be re-enacted according to the rules of Jason Dodge's recent sculptural project, Helsinki, form would have its day of triumph. Though, at first glance, these works possess a distinct air of purpose, it quickly becomes clear that any relation they may have to objects we live and work with is tentative at best.

Taken as a group, the eight works that make up Helsinki interact with one another to tell a story about a "misguided ornithologist who has traveled to Finland," according to the press release. Without this information, a vague understanding of the fictitious character's profession and interests might be acquired by a very open-minded and inquisitive viewer. Reference to birds, for instance, can be found in a logo on the satellite dish of the Bird Tracking System. Also, in order to give a loose indication of setting, two of the pieces are partially covered in fake snow who hasn't heard of the harsh Nordic climate while "Helsinki" is stenciled on the wooden case of the Parachute.

In general, the theme of a scientific expedition suggests itself. Cargo boxes, a tent, a portable bed and various gadgets and accessories are strewn about as if they were part of a base camp.

Yet any story that can be cobbled together from these individual pieces is buried under the visual confusion of competing stylistic signifiers. After trying to construct an image of the ornithologist by naming the task performed by each apparatus, the viewer's attention is drawn from the objects' perceived use value toward a wide range of fleeting allusions to twentieth-century design. A degree of familiarity with the styles of specific designers and architects is called for in order to detect the referencesome more subtle than others-to the corporate logo of Lufthansa, the fabrics preferred by Helmut Lang and the structural sensibility of Adolf Loos, among others.

These brief epiphanies of product identification lead us to the crux of Dodge's investigation: how the outline of a narrative provides the plat-



**Jason Dodge, *Storage*, 1997-98, mixed media.**

form upon which the seductive power of style is demonstrated. And it is through the mechanics of display that Helsinki communicates an obsession with form as the primary stylistic indicator. The Bird Tracking System, for instance, does not simply rest on the ground; it is given its own elegant base and fluorescent lamp, which, along with the synthetic snow, lend the ensemble the look of a trade-show exhibit. Each element of the grouping plays off the other to enhance the feeling of lavish presentation.

This highly refined and rather misplaced taste for luxury-work in the field typically requires a more Spartan existence—diminishes the role of the fictitious ornithologist and highlights that of the objects' producer. In Tent (cut-away view), a number of small items—a leather folder containing maps, some sort of syringe, a scale and a Nokia cell phone, the only 'found' object included—recline on a bed of fur, seemingly waiting to be picked up, touched, handled. Their sensuous-

ness reveals that Dodge's knowledge of style is gleaned through his own process of fabrication. In order to produce these embodiments of desire, he must spend hours lovingly finding the right proportions, polishing the contours, painting the surfaces and stitching the fabric. All of which speaks to a deep-seated longing to surround oneself with attractive, well-made things that one knows inside and out. How better to comprehend your world than to build it yourself? For Dodge, the compulsion to create his own environment results in objects that move fluidly in and out of the categories of sculpture and design. Part of the Weather Station, for example, recalls Alexander Calder's mobiles while another of its components resembles a trash container or a mailbox. Similarly, the Storage boxes conjure up visions of Minimalism while referring to Ikea style, stackable crate systems. Since the works are not dependent on any single, previously articulated style, the artist is able to simultaneously assert his own presence and

become more intimate with the objects of his desire.

There is clearly a current of fetishism running through this project, expressed in the terms of a shameless materiality. Consider the group's most 'useless' piece: titled Snow, it is a sled-like form covered in artificial white flakes. It consists simply of a sheet of high-grade plywood bent upwards at either end and slit down its length in five places. Whether or not this shape is meant to indicate a sliding or dragging function is, in the end, beside the point. In marveling at its gentle curves and admiring the patterns made by the thin layers of wood, we recognize it as a beautifully crafted, but thoroughly ineffectual, tool. As a manifestation of sheer formal fantasy, it makes the claim that this is a worthy function in itself.

**Gregory Williams**

# The New York Times

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*THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1998*

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## ART IN REVIEW

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Jason Dodge  
Casey Kaplan  
48 Greene Street  
SoHo  
Through May 23

Jason Dodge offers a fresh combination of sly conceptualism and sleek design in his first New York solo show. Predecessors like Haim Steinbach, Ashley Bickerton and Andrea Zittel come to mind, but Mr. Dodge has his own humorously oblique vision.

An implied story of Far North exploration connects Mr. Dodge's disparate assemblages. Each piece represents a highly stylized expedition element. A supply sled consists of a piece of furniture-grade plywood with upturned ends bearing a stack of perfect bright yellow boxes, each neatly labeled with its supposed contents: "Fox furs, heater" or "Telescope, trap, nets."

"Tent (Cut-Away View)" presents a miniaturized camp interior equipped with luxury commodities, including a polar bear rug, a leather map portfolio and a cell phone, all basking in the light of an ultramodern stainless steel lamp.

Of course these things have nothing to do with real arctic exploration. Rather, they simulate high-end catalogue images or window displays in which yearning for adventure outside the soul-pinching constraints of bourgeois civilization is deflected into consumerist desire.

KEN JOHNSON

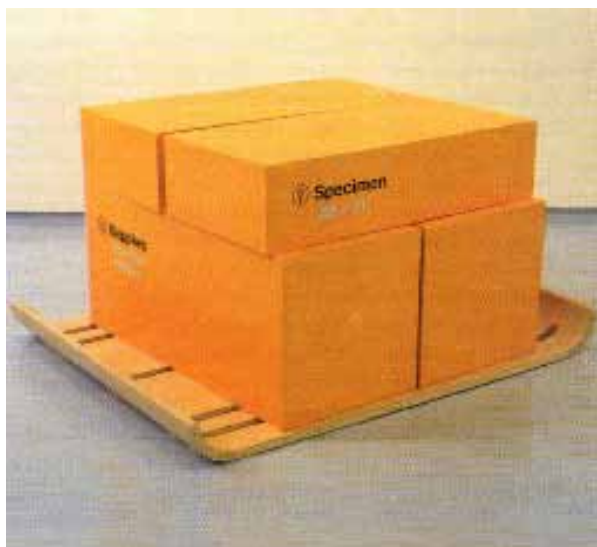
# ARTFORUM

DECEMBER 1998

## The Best of 1998

Ronald Jones

8 Jason Dodge, "Helsinki" (Casey Kaplan, New York) Jason Dodge possesses an extremely light touch considering the stately and sterile effects of his raw, exaggerated iconography. In *Storage*, 1997-98, for example, pure, uncut style becomes content. Lufthansa orange, Alvar Aalto's bent-birch style, and reference to the new Finnish design collective, Snowcrash are all brought into the 'mix, producing something that lends new meaning to "saturation overdose." Art history and the history of design will of course be helpful as one wades into Dodge's work, but don't miss his nods to "Kubrick, Nabokov, and Vonnegut.



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