

Interrogation and Intuition

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In a cursory glance Carl Suddath's drawings and sculptures seem to weigh heavier on the side of intuition over interrogation. But when amassed, even in small numbers, this weight becomes ebullient. Some parts seem calculated and some parts appear unplanned and with further questioning both of these observations can be proven false by Suddath's admission to, for example, sketches for what appeared immediately conceived or the converse. In an unfinished work titled The Visible and the Invisible by French philosopher and phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty there is a chapter dealing with these two properties titled "Interrogation and Intuition". In the beginning of "Interrogation and Intuition" Merleau-Ponty addresses these modes of inquiry by stating,

*"Our ordinary questions – "Where am I!?" "What time is it?"- are the lack and the provisional absence of a fact or of a positive statement, holes in the fabric of things or of indicatives that we are sure is continuous, since there is a time, a space, and since the only question is at what point of this space and of this time we are."*¹

Likewise I believe Suddath's work is concerned with 'ordinary questions' and our place from which, as well as our method with which, we ask them. 'Ordinary questions' that Suddath addresses with ordinary materials culled more from hardware stores than from 'art' stores. Their materiality motions to the objects concerns, they are clearly interested in the world at hand. In both drawings and sculpture recognizable forms from the real world echo in space such as molding, icicles, lattice, and other forms. Where for some the quasi-industrial materials such as plywood, concrete, and others suggest a Minimalist inheritance there are large absences that draw that conclusion away. For example there is a lack of the serial, patterns appear more at random than by mathematical formula, intervals seem arbitrary, finishes may at first appear somewhat industrial and then show the traces of a visible hand. I think it is these aberrations in Suddath's work that align themselves with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. That is, a phenomenology that views the world as tangible and 'carves out' or 'unravels' facts and essences all the while admitting something is missing and addressing that absence.

It is telling that The Visible and the Invisible went unfinished because it contains in itself a chasm, a break, an abyss by not containing an ending. Due to the death of Merleau-Ponty it remains open. Of course there was an ending planned, Merleau-Ponty left behind many notes for what would occur in that ending, but let us suspend that knowledge and consider the Borges like idea of a book that does not end and the space that creates. The hole in the fabric that that lack illuminates. Clearly these aberrations were concerns of Merleau-Ponty and I think of Carl Suddath as well. Suddath's sculptures and drawings address identifiable parts from the world while not being that specific part yet in a staggering act of honesty they are in the world. They don't get all solipsistic on us, they don't make their own world, and when one gazes upon the fallow fields of contemporary art it is clear that these are easy paths that garner many people success. Rather, Suddath's work takes a more difficult route encouraging modes of identification that question location and temporality in the here and now by both interrogation and intuition. Yet even when the location from whence certain forms originate is recognized they still assert their own individual properties. Simultaneously of and in the world Suddath's sculptures assist us in analyzing and intuiting our experience of the world "in order to know how it opens us to what is not ourselves."

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¹ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. The Visible and the Invisible. Northwestern U.P. Evanston, IL 1964.