

Elemental

My use of symbols starts with a deep distrust with the written word as I use it. I began using symbols many years ago. Mostly I used arrows as a way of moving thoughts along faster and more effectively than the usual array of punctuation marks. Gradually symbols or “marks” worked their way into all forms of note-taking and eventually into drawings and now they share center stage.

A circle or arrow has a freshness that feels more spontaneous than the use of capitals, colors, or exclamation points. The dash and the question mark are exceptions and I use them. For instance—really takes two thoughts and leaves them cohabitating together with equal importance yet unifies them within a sentence. The question mark reminds me of the bell end of a jester’s hat—subverting the thought after its delivery. Maybe it’s the Spanish use of a flipped question mark at the beginning of the sentence—warning you of the subversive nature of the sentence—that made me think of the jester’s role.

But this really prefaces the work that Camille saw and wanted me to write about. About a year and a half I was approaching a crisis in my work. I felt I had to eliminate everything (meaning extraneous forms) from my sculptures that were not part of what I call now a “situation”.

My definition of the word tries to be as broad as possible. For starters there is a space created by a cable strung between a wall and a pipe, or a cable connecting two right angled walls.

I call this a spacial situation. I decided on cables and pipes because both live in my life in a very present way. Cables hold my mast on my boat and are what I grasp onto first when I make my way to the bow of the boat. Pipes I used to provide a barrier between the window and the apartment space.

Then where the cable is fastened to the wall I spray that point of contact. I started with a sprayed dot but soon realized that was not enough and began using the marks I use now. As much as that anchor was permanent there was a need to suggest a plausible variant. All this spraying becomes now no longer just a 3D situation but a 2D situation as well.

An arrow often begins at the point where the cable is attached to the wall. It then draws your eye to its point. Of all the marks it has the strongest associations with time and desire. It can point to nothing in particular—which is just that. An open-ended space. Arrow can end at something specific, for instance a corner or another mark and has the effect of pulling your eye to notice its direction.

It's particularly hard to make a curve land with the arrow just where you want it. Always making these sprays requires a particular mindset on the sprayers part. They have to think of that mark throughout the spray's duration (which is always slower than is imagined but not slow enough to cause distracting drips).

A dot with a larger circle around it reads a bit like a bulls-eye. It says “ hey look here”. And “look” can translate to “stop” or “aim” here.

With the “X” mark a number of contradictory voices can reside. The “X” can behave like the bulls-eye and say “aim here”. But when the “X” is sprayed on top of say a bulls-eye (or any other mark) it simply negates the previous mark. So alone it can affirm and with another mark it negates everything.

Squares and circles are space encapsulators. Frequently they are followed by other marks.

If the white walls have a way of opening up space
I often need to close in on one part of the wall and box it in.

I have discovered by making a shape larger than what
one might make naturally a waiver in the line is almost inevitable.
Often these rectangles have those waivers. And what is natural
in a spray mark? For me something between the wrist used to
draw and the shoulder used for a large painted gesture.

What mark is sprayed last and sits on top
is the last of the series of directives.

Think of a dance choreography;
stop... wait 20 sec then more left....

A dot on the sprayed line that circles or squares on
itself is a defined point on the edge of two types of spaces.
An T on its side is about continuity and rupture.

Reading it from right to left the duration
(the horizontal part of the line) is either before
or after the rupture/pause (the vertical line).

Two vertical lines parallel forming something
close to a fat “11” is almost enclosed, a space
heightened but not frozen.

I am drawn to that polarity between movement and stasis.
I think I needed to rid myself of making forms to get closer to
this situation between the spacial and the planar, the sculptural
and the drawn between the decision and the doubt. I am looking
for a transparency between thought and space.

Lastly the cross-out. It speaks for itself, filled
with emotion anger and impatience.