



JEREMY BOYLE & MARK FRANCHINO • *five* • May 11 to June 29, 2018



Artist/musician Jeremy Boyle received his BFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago and MFA from The Ohio State University. He is a founding and current member of the Chicago group Joan of Arc, whose forthcoming LP "1984" will be released on Joyful Noise Recordings in June, followed with US and European tours. He has exhibited artwork, which often explores technology as means, material or content, in major cities across the U.S, including Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Seattle, Miami, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. He is currently Lecturer and Director of Fabrication Studios in the Studio Arts Department at the University of Pittsburgh. www.jeremyboyle.com

Mark Franchino received a BFA from the State University of New York at Buffalo and an MFA from the University of Delaware. Since that time, his works, which play with the distinctions between form/function and image/object, have been shown in more than 100 group and solo exhibitions nationally and internationally, including exhibitions at the Universität der Künste in Berlin, Germany, the International Print Center in NYC, and the Carnegie Museum of Art. As a visiting/resident artist he has lectured widely, including at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, the University of Alberta in Edmonton, and the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica in Venice, Italy. Currently, Franchino is Professor of Art at Clarion University of Pennsylvania. Previously, he was an Assistant Curator and the Print Studio Coordinator at the Plains Art Museum in Fargo, ND, where he organized an international artist residency program. Franchino, originally of Long Island, N.Y., now lives in Clarion, PA. www.markfranchinodesigns.com

images from front: *Panel*, 2018, various hardwoods, lightbulb • *Monument 1 for D. Flavin*, 2018, LED light tubes (cool white), graphite on paper over board • *Chair (drawing)*, 2018 white oak and ash inlay, birch panel, white stain, graphite • *Garbage Can (sculpture)*, walnut • *Incandescent Bulb*, 2018, LED light tube (cool white), electronics, graphite on paper over board • *Cluster (Hallwalls)*, 2018, various hardwoods, custom installation • *Garbage Can (drawing)*, 2018, walnut inlay, birch panel, white stain • *Chair (sculpture)*, 2018, white oak, ash, maple • *Duct*, 2018, various hardwoods



HALLWALLS CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER
341 DELAWARE AVENUE BUFFALO NY 14202 716.854.1694 WWW.HALLWALLS.ORG

JEREMY BOYLE & MARK FRANCHINO

five



five is a new site-specific installation by artists Jeremy Boyle and Mark Franchino, generated from a collaborative practice built around questions of process and problem-solving. They frequently attempt to resolve preposterous imaginings and improbable tasks and confound the expectations of material form, function, utility, and art. In doing so, the physical gesticulations of their work poke and prod at questions about art and the ambiguous spaces within which meanings are sought and discerned.

Systems, functionality, industrial design, and modularity are recurring motifs and methods in their work. A simple point of departure for their current installation is the utilitarian pathways created by electrical conduit, whose physical lines can be both apparent and hidden within physical spaces. It is the simplest proposition that sets the artists along a path—reimagining the components of such a system as hardwood rather than metal. This innocuous-seeming material transformation affects questions of utility and sculpture while also introducing genuine problem-solving dilemmas (not the first problem the artists present themselves).

Function gives way to the imperatives of form, while at the same time maintaining some of its functionality. The wooden conduit created by the artists (including its humorous and difficult-to-achieve 90-degree angles) still transmit current and provide light—at least, much of it does. Other tangles of conduit are just sculptural clusters to accentuate the ambiguous zone between function and form. These non-functioning clusters of conduit also suggest—literally and figuratively—the knot the artists have tied for themselves, a bit of self-reflexive angst laced with a lightly-humorous touch that is apparent throughout the installation. Nearby, a wooden length of duct work pokes through a gallery wall from one side to another, a punctuation mark for the clustered hilarity beside it.

The wooden conduit snakes into and through portions of the gallery as though leading the viewer into unexpected moments and ruminations. And nothing is precisely as it first appears. It remains unclear, for example, if the wooden junction box is powering the wooden conduit. In a series of wall works, drawing, painting, and sculpture are all utilized to blur the line between image and object. Some wall works are self-illuminated so that function melts into form as effectively as sculpture melts into drawing. Two of these wall works depict simple functional objects—a vintage lawn chair and a trash can—and are made doubly-quixotic by physical sculptures depicting these objects.

The sculpted trash can and lawn chair share an implausibility of manufacture with the rounded wooden conduit. But even as their

functional utility is made ridiculous through their actual presence, their sculptural aura is weirdly satisfying and magical as they sit before us. With its lid propped up nearby and its interior open to us, the trash can is candidly open. We can see to its bottom, yet it still evokes something mysterious—if not a bottomless pit, then at least a well of resonant knowledge or some other suggestions of peculiar import. Curiously, the wooden lawn chair is so acutely and convincingly rendered that, even in its absolute banality, it has about it a powerful and magnetic allure.

The strange effects created by these simple objects and direct manipulation of materials results from both material and process. Wood is an unquestionably romantic material with its own inherent allure and that contributes to the powerful aura of these simple works. But that material presence cannot be separated from the elegant fashion with which the works are wrought. Taken together—the wood, the selective lighting, the minimalist aesthetic—an extremely atmospheric terrain is established, full of elegant resolutions and equally elegant contradictions. Alongside, there is the weirdness and the mystery, the notion that sculptural forms are often primarily things that relish their own thingness, their presence in space, before and for a viewer.

The entirety of Boyle and Franchino's installation can be seen as a "drawn" environment comprised of calculated lines, directional inferences, and imagery that is frequently undecided about whether it wants to occupy two or three-dimensional space. Or rather, it wants—and does—occupy both. In the same way, there is less of a tension between function and aesthetics and more of a hybrid meeting of the two. The notion of wooden conduit only sounds like a joke when you say it—once you've built it, there it is. And while it remains humorous, it's not farcical. It's real and, in its unexpectedness, starkly beautiful.

Boyle and Franchino's installation is so intently and specifically considered, it acutely underscores the conscious intent of the artists while blurring lines between, design, function, and utility. While doing so, it also achieves a quixotic mystery in the environment it concocts—one constructed from a reiteration of the ordinary in a peculiar and unexpected fashion. From ordinary imagery and direct gestures of material and form, an enigmatic atmosphere is borne. As such, the entirety of the installation serves as metaphor for the strange and elusive machinations of art and its making.

John Massier
Visual Arts Curator

