

Bethany Johnson

Log Book

September 16 – October 21, 2023

Open House: Saturday, September 16, 1-5 pm, Artist in Attendance 3-5 pm, Artist Talk 4 pm

Moody Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of recent sculptures and works on paper by Bethany Johnson. *Log Book* is Johnson's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery.

Of this new series, Johnson states- "Reminiscent of geologic formations, and appearing perhaps at home within a cabinet of curiosities, the intimate sculptures in *Log Book* offer a multi-layered meditation on deep time, material metamorphosis, and the anthropogenic land-scaping of landfills, quarries, and road cuts.

These sculptural works take the form of stratified plinths of contrasting materials that are reminiscent of geological core samples, landfill strata, archival stacks or material storage. While the layered compositions strongly evoke land formations and geologic processes, all of the materials are discarded manufactured items, thereby also addressing notions of anthropogenic waste and its entombment.

The dimensional works are first assembled and composed by cutting and stacking these collected materials, which include plastics, papers, books, aluminum, fabric, rubber, vinyl, and wood. Densely bound together with mechanical pressure—by a hidden internal armature of screws and bolts—the final sculptural forms are then trimmed and sanded to a smooth polish.

The works' satin surfaces evoke the hand-worn patina of worry stones, and the modest scale suggests the intimacy of a beloved keepsake, archived natural specimen, or historically hand-hewn scientific models. Despite their commonplace or otherwise abject component materials, the final results are mysterious and entrancing: the weighty sculptures reveal themselves slowly, asking for close examination and gradual discovery of their material origins.

In *Log Book*, these sculptures are accompanied by a group of drawings that similarly incorporate collaged found paper ephemera to construct landscape-like images that are both spacious and flat, at once poetic and gently matter-of-fact.

As a quietly urgent meditation on the damage of material consumption on our natural environment, the works of *Log Book* offer a new alchemical life to otherwise discarded waste. This body of work addresses the artists' growing concern around anthropogenic environmental degradation, serving as a holistic practice that functions simultaneously as artmaking and act of doting service, aesthetic inquiry and humble act of environmental remediation. The works speak in layers to notions of scale, deep time, the accumulation of knowledge, and our collective futures on this planet."

Bethany Johnson (b. La Porte, IN, 1985) currently lives and works in Austin, TX. She received an MFA degree in Painting from The University of Texas at Austin in 2011 and a BA degree in Studio Art from Kalamazoo College, MI in 2007. Her work has been exhibited at numerous venues including the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont; Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi; Texas State Galleries, San Marcos; The McKinney Avenue Contemporary, Dallas; Austin

Museum of Art - Laguna Gloria; The Wright Gallery at Texas A&M University, College Station; UTSA Art Gallery, San Antonio; Galveston Arts Center; Courtyard Gallery, Austin; and the Creative Research Laboratory, Austin. Bethany Johnson is a recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2023) and has held residencies at Laguna Madre Field Station, Corpus Christi, TX (2022); Joshua Tree Highlands, CA (2020); Institut für Alles Mögliche; Berlin, Germany (2019); Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT (2019 and 2010); Wild Basin Creative Research Center, Austin, TX (2019); Soaring Gardens Artist Retreat, Laceyville, PA (2013); and Denkmalschmiede Höfgen, Grimma, Germany (2011). Johnson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Art History at Texas State University in San Marcos, TX, where she has taught since 2017.

Moody Gallery is open Tuesday - Friday 10:30 am - 5 pm and Saturday 11 am - 5 pm. Bethany Johnson: *Log Book* can also be viewed online at moodygallery.com. For more information, please call or email the gallery at 713-526-9911 or info@moodygallery.com.