

ARTFORUM

Harry Dodge

JOAN

Harry Dodge's recent works might well be the love children of the machine age and the digital revolution; his exhibition at the nonprofit space JOAN, "Works of Love," comprised twelve new sculptures seemingly generated via intertechnological commingling, or perhaps through the tinkering of some ham inventor. Objects such as *Pure Shit Hotdog Cake* and *Black Transparency* (*The Cloud Polis draws revenue from the cognitive capital of its Users*), both 2017, looked like homespun satellites, teetering structures of wood, aluminum, resin, and other found hardware (*Black Transparency* even counts a "rocket ship vent" among its materials). *I am a Strange Loop*, 2017, one of the most impressive works in the show, was an imposing, vehicle-like structure lacquered in glossy magenta paint, outfitted with antennae-like handlebars (or handlebar-like antennae?) and a sheet of polished wood (an analog flat screen?). Resembling little transmitter stations, the carefully balanced assemblages of parts communicated something urgent but remote.

There is a richness in the ambiguity of Dodge's sculpture. Much like his drawings, videos, films, and writings, these works felt playful and open-ended, though far from neutral. Dodge proposes that something new can and should be created from the in-betweens of formal and intellectual discourses. In mining the uncertainties of how objects and ideas might interact, Dodge finds fertile ground for hybrids, mash-ups, and evolutionary beings that manage to be less pedantic than speculative, and that are materially and conceptually intelligent. And there was something imprecisely kinky about the works' installation; displayed in JOAN's loftlike space, the twelve sculptures seemed to crowd one another, giving the viewer a wealth of eye candy in which to indulge at close proximity—though this is not to say that the tight clustering of works detracted from their objectives. Rather, the display was orgiastic and decadent; think robots and artificial intelligence carousing with fetish objects, or becoming them. *Pure Shit*, 2017, for example—made from a tube sock drizzled with black urethane resin—was suggestive of a phallus dripping with the ecstatic excretions of a machine-oiled robot. *Forms-to-Come / I-Got-Mine* (*#companion_module*), 2017, supersized the evocation of a modernist sex machine, its large bent shaft waiting to be stimulated, a form wanting to come.

Though many of the works relied on armatures to suggest function, it was their handmade, informal appearance that most successfully invoked relativity, extending—from maker to object, viewer to object, object to object, viewer to viewer, viewer to maker, etc—an invitation to tinker. Perhaps this is the kind of "love" the artist refers to over and over again, including in his "Works of Love" series, 2017–, from which five works were selected for this show. Four of those were black cast bronzes that seemed to mimic the nearby assemblages—their dark, solid, and seemingly heavy forms contrasting with the colorful combines of real-life things—while hopelessly aspiring to the authority of capital-S sculpture. They were awkward, pleonastic things, not quite man- or machine-made, working too hard toward artificiality and authenticity. Yet the posthumanist context of Dodge's work redeems them. If technology allows for the movement of people and ideas beyond single states of being, then Dodge's sculptures aim to achieve a technology of intersubjectivity, an interspecies energy exchange that has the potential to be called *love*.

—Catherine Taft



Harry Dodge, *Pure Shit*, 2017, sock, urethane resin, A-clamp, Plexiglas, aluminum, pine dowel, 41 × 31 × 7".

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