

Placing Awaiting Objects

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0.0 Objects. A room of objects. Objects that demand. The demand of the object is always twofold. In the first instance it concerns the object's presence. Its presence as an object. The second is the site of that presence. Objects are always placed. This doubled demand of the object is at work within Elizabeth Presa's most recent sculptural installation *Atlantis*. Noted below is a selection of responses to that work. Having been selected and thus excised – chosen and removed – and then placed together they become, in their own right and thus in their own way, objects.

1.1 Objects. Things placed together. One in relation to another. Objects. Holding in place. Being in place : *objecting*. Having placed the objects, the question of the relation is assumed. Re-placing objects is to open up a certain form of endlessness within relationality. Objects are always in a relation. A room full of objects. Neither merely cast nor cast about. There is a process of gathering. Gathering after making. Objects intersect with a process – an activity – of display. Remnants. Objects that remain. As though in remaining they then, and perhaps only then, are able to complicate questions of use. Another line drawn through use will have been acknowledged. What does it mean for an object to be in use? Or, to allow the question to be posed more emphatically: what is the relationship between use and the presence of non-use? What would it mean for potentiality to be present within an object? This question gestures elsewhere. What it brings into play is a premise that will always have been at work with objects. Straightforwardly, the premise is that potentiality is an ineliminable quality of an object. Potentiality is linked to use – equally to forms of reuse – and this will be the case even if the forms of use, what could be described as the becoming object of the object, can be neither stated nor determined in advance. It is only potentiality that allows an object to be at rest.

1.3 Rest underscores this sense of possibility. In sum, once the object is at rest its potentiality is reinforced. However, what potentiality brings into play is a of abstraction. Prior to any type or instance of use, equally after a use that will have become, to varying degrees, indeterminate precisely because it has become part of the object's past, use, while ineliminable, will always involve differing degrees of abstraction. Abstraction once thought beyond the hold of negation necessitates the affirmed presence of potentiality. While abstraction may seem to be no more than the figure of a form of absence, such a reduction, while capturing a possibility within abstraction, misconstrues it. Absence is more complex than the noted presence of that which fails to figure. Absences can be reconfigured such that a failure to figure reappears as that which awaits a form of configuring. It will have been stripped of the hold of melancholia and thus of its having been determined by loss. Within this reworking of questions of appearance and figuration negation gives way to abstraction. In giving way it opens up awaiting. Once awaiting is linked to a

coming possibility – equally once awaiting necessitates the dissipation of a form of figuration (use) and in its dissipating gives rise to a future possibility, abstraction eschews the work of negation and failure and becomes the presentation of potentiality.

1.6 In any presentation within the plastic arts abstraction cannot be equated with the non-presence of figure. The contrary is the case. Abstraction is the presentation of the object as a site of potentiality. What is figured within abstraction occurs *in potentia*. To be clear, potentiality is not merely futural. The presentation of the object's potentiality occurs to the extent that the determinations given by use and thus the determinations that are attached due to an object's actual history – its history as the history of its use – has dissipated. As such then there is an opening. An opening having become the space of an allowing in which the interplay of history and use no longer determine the object's presentation.

1.8 Gathered objects. Abstraction – as a site of potentiality – are there, within *Atlantis*, in the delicacy of the specific objects whose gathering, placing, comprises the display. (Display, here, should be understood as a process of presentation in which the object's material presence is central, the process of *objecting*). Equally, of course, it is there in their whiteness. The whiteness, which is not just the presence of white, as though white lacked a material force whose particularity denied the reduction of white to the uniform and therefore to white as only ever existing *in simpliciter*, harbours abstraction. In *Atlantis* the process *objecting* cannot be separated from the materiality of whiteness.

2.0 Objects endure. To endure demands a location. Objects, therefore, are always placed. To the extent that the question of the object is maintained, the question of place – the object's place – has a concomitant endurance.

2.2 The potentiality that is the object's work cannot be separated from location. Location however always devolves. It becomes the place of particularity.

2.5 As a place *Atlantis* has always elicited discovery. *Atlantis* announces therefore the tension within discovery: i.e. the founding inseparability of creation and re-creation. *Atlantis* can be approached in terms of this tension. The presentation of the recovered, the gathered that have then been placed and displayed, allow for the own materiality to have an insistent presence precisely because their particularity – a particularity in which the relationship between the singular and the plural is both announced and then complicated – is caught in the interplay of the material and the abstract. Here the object in holding itself apart from the literal object – and thus the literal object's elementary presentation, an occurrence in which the work of art takes on the quality of the museum and in so doing eschews art's work – stages art's work as *objecting*. *Objecting*, as the melding of object, process and presentation, sustains materiality : the object as material event.

3.1 Atlantis has been sustained as a mythological prompt. Initially occurring with Plato's writings – though even within that context - Atlantis is a place orientated by ambivalence. Neither axiomatically ideal nor its opposite, Atlantis is located at an intersection in which place emerges in relation to the political. (As the site, one with its own history, for divergent forms of political aspirations.) Indeed, it can be understood as announcing the necessity of that relation and thus the necessity that the political be attributed the quality of its inherent involvement with being-in-place. Rather than try and resolve the ambivalence – a resolution that could occur by literalising Atlantis on the one hand or valorising it as no more than a utopian impulse on the other – ambivalence should be understood as a defining condition of place.

3.3 Ambivalence is able to function as a term central to any philosophical undertaking that involves geography. Philosophy cannot be equated with description. A philosophical geography is concerned with the complex interrelationship between being-in-place and potentiality. A set up that depends upon the maintenance of abstraction. Atlantis therefore names that dynamic setting that is the continual connection and interconnection of being-in-place, potentiality and abstraction. They are there at the centre of Atlantis. They become the philosophical object. Here Atlantis encounters the question of its display : Atlantis and *Atlantis*.