

FROM JEAN-MARIE,

The following is an exercise in approaching a body of artwork by one of TINYisPOWERFUL's members, Morgan Kinne, as she presents it at Redux until the end of this month.

First, Morgan and I had two long meetings at the gallery. I already knew the work but we had never had a professional exchange about it.

Then I wrote my piece with all the intensity I could muster. It is important to approach art with as much exhilaration as it takes the artist to produce it.

Otherwise, you might as well wrap it in conventions and treat it as dead fish! Objectivity may come later, when you have gathered thoughts from everywhere possible.

Second, Morgan is invited to make her own remarks, about the text produced, as well as to correct errors, mostly add her insight and experience ... anything she cares to write about, susceptible to satisfy her need to communicate about the work. This exercise in self-criticism is also meant to alleviate the dangers of self-censorship.

Her remarks are entered in the right column of a two-column "article".

It is my experience that critics hate being asked to be put or to put themselves on the spot! The artist, on the other hand, learns much about the relativity of art criticism, perception, misinterpretation, plain factual errors! At the end, though, everyone has learned a thing or two about communication!

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN MORGAN AND JEAN-MARIE AROUND HER SHOW AT REDUX

As one of the two actors in this conversation, let me say that this text will not be a critique of Morgan's work and that everyone is invited to offer feedback via the APP. *

Actor ONE: the artist, Morgan, who just invited you to come to Redux and see the show. *

Actor TWO: the reviewer, myself with a proviso: who should care about my opinion, unless it contributes professionally to Morgan's art? The whole exercise should also bring clarity to

Actor THREE: the membership of the Collective and others.

After all, the Collective promotes collaboration in the making of Art as well as in the understanding of it. The Critical Response Process has taught us to feed back our fellow artists, ask them questions, let them ask questions, propose thoughts, offer further collaboration.

The conNECKtedTOO—> TINYisPOWERFUL APP will be the vehicle for a virtual dialogue ... until covid lets us all be persons among persons again!

Here we go: *

Morgan frames and gilds as a job*, eight hours a day. She spends an other 8 daily hours un-framing, de-framing, altogether demurring, with her own work, at the veneration "beautiful art" acquires once enshrined in the frames she guilds. Her critical determination goes as far as trampling over her own gilded pieces, before enshrining them back in her own gilded frames!

Monstrative irony? Or, does Morgan have more respect for frames than for framed objects?* I will ask her if, in fact, this is not her analytical mind at work, as I suspect

* Pleased so.

* Please! Come see the show!

* My commentaries are a response to the text on the left, not a general personal commentary of the show.

* I do a bit of this on the job as well. The art is always on my mind and and I never stop thinking about it. Day-to0day experiences/interactions/environment filter in and out of the work - often in unplanned ways. I am curious by nature, and learn as I go

* I'm sure that's not it. If anything, I am mocking the frame and heralding the dirt dust and grime

it is. She will explain (not her words): I don't stop thinking about my art. I also don't stop producing artifacts. At the intersection of these two creative activities, eventually, meaning sets in ... If you visit my Redux studio, there are so many objects or "series" of objects, just sitting there. A reserve ready for intersections. Revelations maybe? (my question)

This process is at work when Morgan repetitively paints misty, musty, fatigued Charleston architecture, with a touch of nostalgia and admiration, on any available surface (cardboard, masonite, plywood, plaster ...), of any size. For this show, she happened to have been introduced to OSB (Oriented Strand Board). Of all the vulgar and cheap construction materials there are, to use OSB as a canvas is a provocation! But hold it here! Now she has uncovered an intersection ... and a revelation! OSB as a work surface on the one hand - the fine graphic techniques she has developed in her practice on the other - charcoal, pencil, or ink drawings, lightly smudged with shellac as a mixing and fixative agent on the other. This gives her houses a quasi-mystic, romantic patina ... to which she applies a final antagonistic touch: nail scratches, rough sandpaper erasures, a chisel mark, the crushed angle of a panel, a paper tear, a drip of paint, why not? Such are the means of an iconoclast.

All the same, Morgan has not missed exploring the soft contrasts and transparencies revealed in the rough wood chips of OSB, or the choreographed (?) imprints of her shoes on gilded paper. Such are the delicacies of an artistic mind, precious and dismissive.

However, Morgan does not take the antagonism built into her choices as a challenge. It is a fully internalized agent of her creative process. She distills it to her advantage into an opportunity for viewers to think, to expand their visual vocabulary, to upend the critical instincts of aficionados.*

they usually try to keep away. No, I don't stop thinking about my working I do continuously make 'things'. But I am not sure I think about them as artifacts- and I am not precious about the objects/ things - as well as the process - are my way of communicating the thoughts. Which I am unlikely to verbalize- so feel free to interpret. I suppose the objects are a reserve though. Anything that occupies my space long enough, I will come back to reinterpret/reform, discard, etc. Some of these reimagined objects appear in the show at Redux now for example, the red bricks on the wall began their journey at least five years ago. I pull them out occasionally to tinker with or stare at but I have never been able to place them anywhere with my work until now.

* My working process tends to be intuitive, gestural, expressive and experimental. I want to push the boundaries/expectations of process and material.

Other antagonism?* Morgan is a sculptor who paints. The Redux show consists of (1) clusters of three or five 24x48" OSB painted panels, protruding off the wall, angled and overlapping, (2) a bas-relief, corner composition, (3) a line of miniature drawings. Against such a deliberately two dimensional offering, how can four three-dimensional, free-standing works but of average size, irradiate enough to keep a perfectly nondescript gallery space activated? How can this scattered show, with **True North** as a name, stay an intense course? Indeed, shelter is a clear leitmotiv, but this here show is no "theme show"! The way Morgan resolves this antagonism is by gearing up to an installation mode.* Beyond the display of individual artifacts, the artist sets off a dialectical process, where each piece in the space and the space itself enter into a dialogue which contributes to the coherence and the understanding of the whole - or something like that!

Morgan has picked the right sculptures to further her dialectics:

two towers, two sentinels ... and a stand-alone, fresh from her mental research lab: the Indigo piece (we keep this one for later). There may have been room for one or two more space-intensifying pieces in the show, but her minimalist bias makes for minimal choices.* Isn't it also that - sensitive to the desolation of covid - she elects bareness over commercial gallery conventions? Morgan is an understated and intentional creator.

To the towers then!*

Originally, Gwylène and I met Morgan's work in Lake City, two years ago or so. There - at a street corner - was a tower, very silent but undeniable, slightly retired from the ArtFields crowds. At first glance, we understood she was an artist we had to meet! Today, she still builds towers. Her latest she retires in regularly, for quiet time and concentration, climbing up, from inside, to a bench and a table in mid-air.

* I like the word, Antagonism. i usually find myself stuck with the jargon-y 'juxtaposition' - for lack of a better word - which feels pretentious, easy and insufficient for what I actually mean.

* Before this show was a possibility, I felt quite confident my art would work together. Going back to my process - despite the different muses/materials/Themes, etc.- it all comes from the same place. A common ancestor if you will. I do think of it as a dialogue because I am asking or responding to similar questions throughout.

* True, I am a minimalist at heart, and I believe there is a lot to be gained from editing the work- or the amount of work- in a space. Overcrowding wouldn't strengthen the body of work or people's perception of the work. Beyond just the minimal choices- yes I am shucking commercial gallery conventions, as well as the 'white cube' conventions of contemporary gallery display. Redux is neither commercial nor white cube. But I think I have scratched the surface of this intention at least enough to make viewers to scratch their heads and think about it.

* My love of towers stretches back to my days as a conceptual MFA

The two towers at Redux live well together as long as they live apart! Such is the dialectics of antagonism: both function as parallel space anchors, separated by an existing column, installation-style.

One is 6" high, a rough/precious miniature of patinaed copper tape. Bravely standing atop its skinny 30" pedestal, it successfully halts the heavy bleeding of gallery space into the gaping corridor behind. It also pairs up with a long horizon line of miniature pen&ink drawings on white card stock, stretched at eye level on the wall behind. A scrapbook of tiny shelters and more tiny shelters.

Comparatively, the other tower is massive. *A 70" stack of 18X18X6" dark-framed plaster modules, painted with yet more shelters - sepia in pale blue landscapes - it stands in dialogue with identical plaster modules, arranged on the corner wall behind. This second visual pairing takes more meaning when Morgan introduces us to her love for red bricks! To do so, she alternates dark-framed plaster modules with new, same-size, dark-framed, red-brick, miniature wall segments, which trigger a semantic game of scale, colors, textures and associated images. This interplay testifies further to Morgan's concentrated thought process.

Don't y'all believe that I am making all this up, by the way. If you study any work of visual art of any weight past its decorative value, it will incapsulate a microcosm of meanings which will explain, every time, why and how the practice and the study of such work are major sources of intellectual activity and innovation. Morgan's art is no exception and she knows not to deny it. Innocence would be a plague artists cannot indulge in. Their art needs to be nourished if it wants to nourish. And may I say: if I am so glad to write this essay, it is because I believe that none of us, in the collective, denies the respect we owe knowledge.

sculpture student in Scotland, where/when I built a 14' tall layered column of plaster, dirt and debris. my layering and stacking days go back even further. I am sure the foundation of that work is still in the towers I am making today.

* It is actually 75" tall, made upon 60 12"x4"x2" plaster 'bricks'.

The sentinels:* two pieces which belong in the same series as the painted OSB wall panels, they stand erect, deliberately isolated, against yet another gaping hole in the wall. They lean backwards in resistance, buttressed with steel jambs and secured on pads. It seems to work!

Now - you can walk behind the sentinels, but at your own risk. Because you may discover yet again a clue of Morgan antagonism.

Generic newspaper pages are pasted on the back of one. On the other back though, if you come closer, you will discover what the pages are about ... Proof that nothing is left to chance, they are all about social justice issues. Morgan may not be vocal. Is she determined though, to peel off the layers of history hidden behind Charleston's quiet(ed) facades?

As I was taking notes during our Redux walk-through, I asked her: next time, the writing will be facing the public, right? She smiled.

The Indigo piece*

The Indigo piece is not a stand-alone! Although closest to the entrance, spatially and visually well separated from all the other works, who would know that its content very much relates to that of the triptych on the wall directly behind, when you enter the gallery? Except for a very astute visitor, or a person in the know or, possibly, a local architect?

The fact is that the triptych's pictures represent, from right to left: a "Charleston Double", a "Single" and a "Freedman's Cottage". So do the three panels of Indigo. Although low on the ground, they overlap the same way the panels on the wall do. The difference is that between elevation (the triptych) and plan (Indigo). This conceptual, analytical shift, indeed, is another proof of Morgan's quiet management of content in her art.*

* None of these panels were ever meant to be displayed- or hung- gallery style (symmetrical and centered on a wall). Most have the news clippings on the back and they can all be interchanged/ rearranged, erect, or hung.

As far as the clippings go... Yes, they are all about social justice issues- specially housing. These pieces are one step in the brainstorming of a not-yet-created sculpture of a lean-to. Hopefully a public art piece that can function as a public sculpture and a functional shelter.

* The triptych on the wall was actually the final piece I made for this show, but what I had originally intended or the Indigo Piece when I proposed it to CCF for a grant..

* This might be what I want my work to do the most. Get you thinking.

Yet what a huge leap this represents! From imagined indoor spaces, rather confined, smothering, contained behind shutters, curtains, opaque blinds, to full-page, in-your-face, atmospheric, vibrant indigo-blue surfaces - actual architectural plans - stretching beyond limits, marked with coded symbols for door openings, windows, partition walls, outside bricked courts. As if a metaphorical envelope had been turned inside out to celebrate the light of day and of extraverted speculation! Something of an other revelation.

* Something also that Morgan may not quite manage yet. The symbols for doors, the walls ... uncontrolled in size and scale! Enthusiasm takes the better of her and her Batik technique gives the graphics so much vibrant life that one reads enthusiasm before meaning.

* An other powerful transformation, the use of steel for structure and indigo (the natural dye) for color, can only show that Morgan, all along, was exploring beyond her comfort zone of drawing, charcoal and shellac. And -is it serendipitous? - her collaborative work with Arianne and me, for the conNECKtedTOO Reynold avenue Community Lab and the Jungle, exposed her to artists who were using these mediums in their work at the time. She went to Arianne's studio to be initiated to indigo and batik and came to mine to work on her steel frames. I maintain that this is what collective/ collaborative work does best: question and expand the visual vocabulary and, hopefully, the conceptual framework of artists,

To end this necessary essay around the work of one of cTOO—>TiP visual artists, I will tiptoe on thin ice. I will attempt to overcome the destructive, anti-social isolation imposed by the pandemic, wear a mask, get closer to the artist, reach to the more intimate mechanisms at work in her art, as I see them. In fact, two of what I call her metaphysical markers are actually in plain sight. What she does not offer is a map

* Good. This work- none of it- is meant to be a bookend, or a conclusion. I am not pessimistic or subversive. I want to address contemporary issues/injustices/ overall problems alongside some sense of hope/momentum/ otherwise progress. Not a solution- of course I don't have answers- but this work, like everything else is a work in progress.

* This could stem from it being my first venture with indigo, but I always intended for the symbols and marks to be abstracted and gestural. Never measured or accurate, but just touching on some of the recognized architectural elements of these Charleston houses, usually seen as facades. I got excited about this piece though, so maybe some enthusiasm pushed through.

* I am curious and analytical by nature. I observe, participate and process the world around me and the connections/discoveries I make filter into the work. I always want to push my practice- thought/ process/material.. Of course exposure to the personalities, practices and resources of the collective influences my work. Everything does.

of how to navigate the space they define inside her creative alchemy.

. One is defined by the hugely enthusiastic smile she projects on her official conNECKtedTOO/Tiny Business poster - immediately countered by the hint of defensiveness I sense in the close-up painting of her mouth, very full of teeth, which she pushes on us, as both a welcome and a warning. Something like the hill-billy's index finger, pointed at me when we cross path, in our respective pick-up trucks, on a far-off mountain road:

“Hi, there! ... but ... Stay away!”

. The other marker I found posted on the back window of her truck: her watercolor of a WW2 military cemetery in Normandy. This foreboding field of crosses is just threatening enough to get you thinking.

Tell me: how many people do you know, who post the image of a cemetery on their vehicle?

I believe that those two markers partly define the field in which Morgan continuously navigates the metaphysics of her art. A dense, silent, retired, yet extremely kind and civil un/reality.

And why not close with an interrogation: doesn't the Indigo piece hesitate between the imagery of a forgotten cemetery where stones were shuffled by weather, time, neglect, war maybe ... and the untamed coming out of azure spaces, marked with generously naive signs affirming that ... there is life here!

* I don't know anything. Please, chime in.