



Lindsay Lawson *The Inner Lives of Objects* Gillmeier Rech, Berlin

Lindsay Lawson invited Erika Eiffel to participate in a public discussion in advance of her recent show, *The Inner Lives of Objects* [May 2–June 13, 2015], at Berlin’s Gillmeier Rech. Eiffel is a founder of OS Internationale, a network and advocacy organization for objectum sexuals (OS)—individuals whose sexual identity is oriented not toward humans but toward objects, from the monumental to the mundane. In her talk, Eiffel explained that unlike sexual fetishists, with whom members of her community are often conflated, OS-identifying people engage in psychic, romantic, and reciprocal relationships with the objects of their affection; in Eiffel’s case, these have included a bridge, a bow, a crane, and the tower with which she shares her name. Eiffel’s patience as an advocate and fluency in the registers of the most nuanced of intimacies are impressive—listening to her, one becomes acutely aware of how inconceivably difficult it would be to describe what love toward another human feels like, to someone for whom this idea is novel or threatening. Faced with this prospect, Eiffel is composed, passionate, and articulate.

She has also become an important interlocutor for Lawson, whose solo show at Gillmeier Rech set out to

address the inner lives of objects—material things as they might exist and evolve independently of our anthropocentric experience. One point of entry is Eiffel’s enduring love affair with the Berlin Wall, an object that she understands not as complicit in the enforcement—and subsequent crumbling—of the oppressive politics for which it is typically emblematic, but instead as an entity that was equally subject to oppression. “When the Wall came down in 1989,” she once said in an interview, “... I just cried. People were hitting and smashing it so bad. It’s an object hated for who he is, hated for dividing a city. But it wasn’t the Wall’s fault, it was the government behind it.” The material itself, Eiffel reminds us, is apolitical, subject to the mercy of more powerful players. This sensual, emotional materialism is considered in *The Inner Lives of Objects*, which exhibited a network of 17 items that share the characteristics of painting, assemblage, and sculpture, and are themselves composed of objects that have been appropriated, instrumentalized, or abandoned.

Lawson’s methodology is consistent across the different shapes and sizes of this body of work: everyday objects from her immediate vicinities at home and in the studio are selected and fixed into molds filled with resin. *Artificial Silk* (2015), for example, casts a fan, a scarf, a knife, a painter’s palette, coins, art-handling gloves, and the artist’s first iPod—still full of the music she listened to before she upgraded—into a dense rectangular block. The scarf and fan are easily identifiable, though the other objects are considerably less so. Seeing the work’s scat-

tered coins gives the viewer the impression of looking into an intimate, mutating space—a purse, a pocket, or a glove compartment. The kitchen knife adds some penetrative drama. Combined, these objects function as abstract clues, evident of some causality beyond apprehension—as in a portrait, or a crime scene. Just as an old iPod petrifies discrete songs into a single slick digital fossil, this work consolidates heterogeneous objects into a solid historical artifact.

Artificial Silk collects the sundry objects of our everyday lives into a forensic snapshot; *Aran* (2015), however, takes a less narrative approach. This sculpture’s silhouette is that of a vase, yet the object isn’t a functional vessel: it is partially hollowed out on its side to reveal an aquamarine, seemingly geological landscape. Depictions on ancient vases were used to tell stories; here, the turquoise viscera corrode this potentially narrative surface, leaving behind organic shapes. Divorcing household, intimate objects from their functionality, and their production by humans, Lawson renders them “useless.” Her vase holds neither liquid nor text; its currency is as an independent object alone. As an object of art, it is most valuable at its most materially useless; as an object of desire, it resists affection. Taken alongside Jacques Lacan’s frequently paraphrased notion that love is “giving something you don’t have to someone who doesn’t want it,” Lawson’s works find an analogue for artistic production in romance.

—Tess Edmonson

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Lindsay Lawson, *Artificial Silk*, 2015, fan, scarf, knife, painter’s palette, iPod, coins, art handling gloves, plaster, pigment, resin, 122 x 97 x 8.5 centimeters; Lindsay Lawson, *Aran*, 2015, sweater, stones, balloon, sponge, paint, plaster, resin, varnish, 36 x 22 centimeters [courtesy of the artist and Gillmeier Rech]