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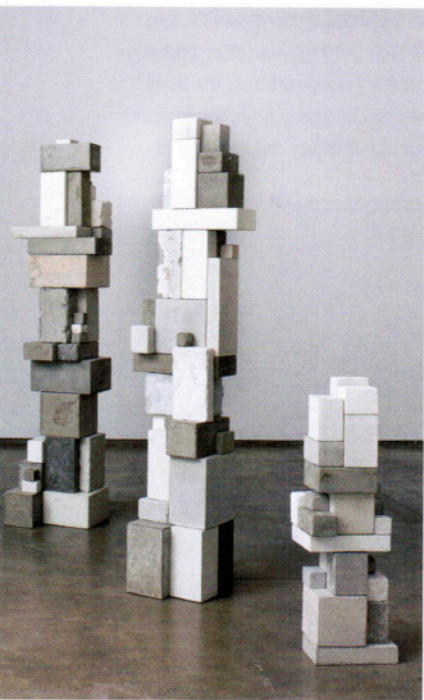
Julianne Swartz

Indianapolis Museum of Art

For Julianne Swartz, liminality is the common locus across disparate objects and materials. She holds some aspects of her work just outside of perceptibility and invites viewers to become participants, to cross thresholds of comprehension and thus fulfill the works.

In "How Deep Is Your," Swartz installed her works not only according to architectural spaces, but also in anticipation of visitors' bodies. For *Line Drawing*, she placed blue

Above: Julianne Swartz, *Line Drawing*, 2012. Tape, optical lenses, mirrors, lights, and fan, installation view. Left: Julianne Swartz, *Surrogate (JS)*, *Surrogate (KRL)*, *Surrogate (ARL)*, 2012. White and gray cement, mica, and 143 clock movements, 3 elements, 40–72 x 17–24 x 8–14 in.



plastic tape on the wall, punctuating the line with lenses that invited viewers to squat and peer into lathing and institutional nether spaces containing hyperbolic continuations of her line. This voyeuristic encounter divulged a radical interruption of the minimal wall drawing. As is the case with many of Swartz's objects, curiosity and interaction were satisfied by revelation. On first viewing, the sculptures *Surrogate (JS)*, *Surrogate (KRL)*, and *Surrogate (ARL)* (all 2012) appear to be concrete meditations on Georges Vantongerloo's De Stijl idiom. The blocks are geometric approximations, if not exactly portraits, of the artist, her husband, and their daughter—spatial relations give way to familial relations. Hidden from sight, the blocks contain clockworks; the visitor, stooping and leaning in, could discern the intimate ticking of these metaphorical beating hearts.

In her photographs, Swartz presents displaced worlds in secondary lenses—a water drop, a soap bubble, or a cosmetics mirror. For instance, in the hovering film of *Couple Bubble (Suspended)* (2004–05), she encapsulates the world in a transparent sphere that evokes the crystal terrarium on the exterior of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* (1505–10). Entire skyscapes and landscapes are visible in the water drops of the "Close" images (2010). In the context of this exhibition, the photographs were instructional insofar as they model the close looking and patience necessary to interaction with Swartz's installations.

A sculptural manifestation of similarly dumbfounding optics, *Shadow House* (1996–98) offers a rift in metaphysical expectations, making shadows seem much more present than the transparent glass mobile that casts them. Further testing the limits of perception, *Air Breath* (1998–99) defies gravity as gossamer silk is borne on air currents.

Audio figured prominently in the show, with recordings resonating throughout the spaces. Seductively placed in the middle of a gallery, the minimal wooden box of *Open* (2009) became effluent with iterations of "I love you!" when visitors raised the lid. The outpouring is at once affirming and embarrassing; *Open* calls one out for transcending the taboo against touching artwork—even if such action is demanded by its title. *Affirmation* (originally 2006) filled the surrounding spaces with positive statements such as "People like you" and "I'll miss you when you're gone." Since *Affirmation* was installed in the gallery entrance, it was easy to accept as sound art. It was quite another matter to hear similarly disembodied, tranquil voices in the museum's restrooms, where the propositions seemed like creepy violations of quasi-private spaces.

The exhibition's showstoppers, though, were Swartz's magnetic installations, which have astonishing presence despite their minimal material. In *Blue Corner Reach* (2006) and *Lean* (2011), slender bits of string and metal (respectively) are held in suspension by attractive and repulsive forces. The tension in these negative spaces seems palpable—their physical aspects merely frame this energy. Though Swartz's works can be architectural in scale, slim as a rod, or non-material, they harness powerful understatements that reward participatory deliberation.

—William V. Ganis