

I AM NOT A CERAMICIST

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Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of Regina, 2005

A Support Paper for M.F.A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
of the University of Lethbridge
in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree

[MASTER OF FINE ARTS, ART]

Department of Art
University of Lethbridge
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

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Abstract

Ceramics has always existed on the fringes of craft and high art. The purpose of this thesis project is to elevate clay beyond the traditions of craft by examining the historical use of clay and the everyday object. My research looks specifically at works by Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons and Jasper Johns in order to examine the origin of displaying the mass-produced object and reflecting upon it's validity as high status art object. In this project I am also interested in infrastructural systems within modern architecture-- plumbing, wiring, heat ducts vents-- with a specific focus on systems lurking inside walls and how these function to influence architectural space. With the advent of modern plumbing, concealing these elements was adopted as the new standard and still exists today. Through the presentation of defamiliarized handmade objects, my exhibition presents the appearance of manufactured material through the serial manipulation of scale, surface and quantity. The result reveals a clay piece that renders the material unrecognizable providing the viewer with a new view on the object's tradition.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express thanks to my parents, Nancy and Doug, and to my sister Bronwen for believing in me and for their support throughout this journey, and to my supervisor, Michael Campbell, my supervisory committee, Mary Kavanagh, Taras Polataiko and Nick Wade, along with the University of Lethbridge without which this would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Glen MacKinnon for a wonderful experience as a teacher's aid. Finally, I would like to thank Kevin Sehn and Catherine Ross for all their technical support and assistance.

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Chapter 1: Clay

I am not a ceramicist, I work with clay. My work as an artist and the support paper accompanying my current body of work will explore my history with ceramics, relating specifically to concepts and themes in art and architecture. The history of the mass-produced object will be explored in the gallery space. From Duchamp's urinal to Jeff Koons *Rabbit* I will be looking at Marcel Duchamp's canonical work, *Fountain*, first displayed in New York in 1917 of a urinal and will be comparing this gesture to the work of Andy Warhol and his sculpture, *Brillo box* first displayed in New York's Stable gallery, 1964. I will explore the relationship between the everyday mass-produced object and the gestures of various artists that have challenged the art world's classification of low and high status art objects. I will also consider how Marcel Duchamp's urinal would function as the catalyst in altering the role of the everyday object in art, which has influenced generations of artists that used imagery and materials that challenged the division between low and high status objects. Artists such as Jasper Johns and Jeff Koons will be examined for their use of the everyday object; as well, Andy Warhol's *Brillo box* will be compared and contrasted in this discussion of classification of media.

Further, I will discuss the origins of plumbing and the role clay played in early modern architectural infrastructure. Specifically I will look at the introduction of plumbing during the turn of the 20th century and how this advancement in sanitation influenced everyday spaces. The architecture designed during this period was focused on hiding the infrastructure. The idea that the urinal, sink and bathtub could become cultural symbols of prosperity and progression will be investigated.

When I first began my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, majoring in sculpture at the University of Regina, I did not intend to work with clay; I did not even consider myself an

Artist. Originally, my sights were set on becoming an industrial designer, as I was fascinated with architecture and spaces. I soon learned early on that I enjoyed working with my hands. When introduced to sculpture by artists such as John Noestheden and Dennis Evans, my interest turned to outdoor installation work. I was fortunate enough to also be in John Noestheden's drawing class and quickly found myself sharing his affinity for detail and construction. Experimenting with steel, wood and found objects, and attempting to combine and challenge viewers' perception of material became the focus for my graduating exhibition. Having a background as a cabinet-maker early on in his career John Noestheden understood and encouraged my interest in pursuing another media. The semester before graduation, I enrolled in an introductory ceramics class.

In introductory ceramics, I soon learned that clay has a long history of being displayed as craft and defined as low status within the history of art discourse. In this paper I will be using the terms low and high status. Traditional sculpture accepted in contemporary art prior to Duchamp essentially consisted of mediums such as bronze, gold and stone, holding a monopoly on what passed through museums and gallery doors elevating them to high status. Any other materials such as clay, textiles, steel and wood were used for functional objects such as pots, clothing and furniture. Objects were labelled as craft therefore garnering no artistic merit and value and in this discussion referred to as low status. Roszika Parker and Griselda Pollock in their book *Women, Art & Ideology*,¹ explained how the classification system of low status originated in the Renaissance. Where the definition between high and low status art originated and was fully defined.

¹ Pollock, Griselda, and Roszika Parker. "Crafty Women and the Hierarchy of the Arts." *Old Mistresses; Women, Art & Ideology*. London: Routledge, 1981. Print.

Art history views the art of the past from certain perspectives and organizes art into categories and classifications based on a stratified system of values, which leads to a hierarchy of art forms. In this hierarchy the arts of painting and sculpture enjoy an elevated status while other arts that adorn people, homes or utensils are relegated to a lesser cultural sphere under such terms as “applied”, “decorative” or “lesser” arts. This hierarchy is maintained by attributing to the decorative arts a lesser degree of intellectual effort or appeal and the greater concerned with manual skill and utility. The clear division of art forms into fine arts and decorative arts, or more simply, the arts and the crafts, emerged in the Renaissance and is reflected in changes of art education from craft-based workshops to academies and in the series of art produced by those academies.²

Because this attitude remains, the majority of historical images of clay are representations of functional vessels. My attraction to clay in the beginning was learning the techniques, such as throwing a vessel on a wheel. Throwing is a technique where clay is traditionally formed into vessels atop a spinning cylindrical surface. Martin Tagseth was my professor, a production potter trained in Red Deer and a graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. I was influenced and inspired by his drive to constantly push the boundaries and limits of the material. Learning various techniques such as stains, glazes and slips gave me the repertoire of skills to alter the vessel in ways that would have seemed impossible. I remember seeing a demonstration by the artist Jack Sures throwing a large piece of clay on a wheel. I was fascinated by how easily the clay could be manipulated and transformed with simple hand gestures and small tools. When I touched clay for the first time, the ease in which my hands could pass through its smooth surface yet retain form was an experience that attracted me to the medium. During the period I spent learning to throw, I also experienced many techniques associated with ceramics such as hand building and slip casting. My work began to centre on creating vessels that were not only visually appealing, but that were also functional in nature. I continued to work on my craft and to increase my skills in throwing.

² Ibid., 50.

I began to discover that certain clay bodies were better suited for sculpture than throwing. Clay seemed limitless in its use as a sculptural material; it can be rendered into anything. Once fired in a kiln, objects can exist in any natural and artificial environments. As time passed I found myself becoming less satisfied with creating functional work. As a sculptor, my technique was to deconstruct my thrown forms and create representations of functional vessels. However, I was aware of the low status afforded to any work done with clay and wanted to further examine the origins of clay's cultural uses and subsequent status in the visual arts. Working with a material that exists outside bronze, gold and stone, which traditionally are seen as high status materials, I was constantly being labelled a ceramicist.

After graduation, I found myself struggling to find my place in the art community, looking for new avenues of inspiration. I still considered myself a student, and was eager to continue my studies at the University of Regina. This enabled me to maintain a studio space and mentorship from artists such as Ruth Chambers and Rory McDonald. These faculty members were instrumental in allowing me to continue working with clay. Both artists had established careers, as functional potters however like me were interested in experimenting with surface and texture. I learned that each also had a practice that involved work exhibited nationally and internationally. Learning that not being labelled as strictly ceramicist my own work needed to go through even greater evolution and investigation. Ruth's work was predominantly thin delicate illuminated porcelain casts. Her work again showed me how the material can appear so fragile and delicate yet in reality be very strong and rigid. Rory McDonald was my throwing mentor spending countless hours helping me refine my technique. He helped me respect the craft of throwing and understand the years of dedication and commitment it takes to produce a

vessel. I learned from Rory that the ideal vessel is when form, function and surface all exist in perfect balance in relation to the object.

During this time, I began working at the Norman Mackenzie art gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan. This included guided tours during the evening as well as afternoon school groups. During my time as a gallery facilitator at the Mackenzie Art Gallery, I was fortunate to be part of a blockbuster exhibition that included the life's work of Andy Warhol.

The 1960's and 1970's were a time when industry and commercial culture became fused together. Warhol was interested in silk-screening, video and sculpture, and his various applications contributed to a redefining of the art object. Many critics viewed Warhol's work as merely commercial exploitation, copies of a readymade with nothing original to offer as far as critical discourse. Warhol's Brillo boxes for me are similar to my clay objects because the function is removed and what is left is merely a representation. The representation replaces the function and takes on a new meaning when function no longer defines the way we interpret the object. The Brillo boxes, however familiar the brand name, are merely a representation of a handmade object never able to complete its original function. Andy Warhol is an important influence because he, like Duchamp, successfully challenged the definition of the art object.

Also during my time at the gallery, I found myself drawn to artists such as Joe Fafard, Jack Sures and Vic Cicansky who all moved to Regina in the 1960's and 1970's. All three men were sculptors who practiced in Southern Saskatchewan working with clay at some point in their careers. Joe Fafard sculpted clay figures of individual characters from small-town Saskatchewan. Vic Cicansky made a name for himself casting such

vernacular subjects as canned vegetables, fruits and other familiar objects that were staples of many rural homes and communities. Jack Sures also began sculpting and throwing with clay. These artists worked with clay in ways that were viewed at the time of modernist ideology as radical and nonconventional. During my time at the Mackenzie Art Gallery I was fortunate enough to meet Joe Fafard, who was very approachable. The one resonating impression I took away from the meeting was that despite his national and international success he still acknowledges his rural upbringing. The hard work it took that coincides with being raised in small-town Saskatchewan has seemed to propel Fafard throughout his career as an artist. Terrence Heath, a long time friend, explains in a short documentary film entitled *I do not have to work that big*. Heath recalls,

I was on the set one day, and I remember Joe offering the crew the opportunities to make things with clay. He was not interested in giving them a class in art or in demonstrating the difficulties of what he seems to do so effortlessly. Rather, he seemed to feel slightly uncomfortable being the only one working with the clay. No one but the sound man, Jacques Drouin, took him up on it, but I remember Joe and me composing together as we waited interminably, it seemed, for the lights to be set up, cameras to be adjusted and decisions to be made along satire on the unearthing of fragments of objects in the studio by some future archaeologist. His imagination and inventiveness seem never to sleep.³

Joe Fafard's working with clay in which resonates with my own ideas I have with clay is that the sculptural material is not limited by traditions but only in the way we treat objects that force clay to be encountered in new ways. My work attempts to move clay away from the stereotypes that have plagued the ceramic artist.

³ Heath, Terrence. "Working With Clay Cups, Portraits And First Successes." *Joe Fafard*. Ed. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2007. 104. Print

Chapter 2: The Readymade

William Camfield, in his essay, "Marcel Duchamp's Fountain: Aesthetic Object, Icon, or Anti-Art?" cites an interview with Katherine Kuh as Duchamp explains his definition of a readymade object. Duchamp states,

Let's say you use a tube of paint; you didn't make it you bought it and used it as a ready-made. Even if you mix two vermilion together, it's still mixing two ready-mades. So man can never expect to start from scratch; he must start from ready-made things like even his own mother and father.⁴

In this chapter, I will explore the relationship between the everyday mass-produced object and artists' gestures that have challenged the art world's classification of low and high status art objects. I will be specifically looking at how Marcel Duchamp's urinal was the catalyst in drawing attention to the everyday object and influencing generations of artists that used imagery and materials that challenged the division between low and high status objects.

To understand the impact of a urinal on display in the gallery space in 1917 one must be aware of the context in which Marcel Duchamp operated, surrounding art production and practice. In an interview by Joan Bakewell in 1968, Duchamp candidly discussed his career, opening up his thoughts and ideas surrounding the art object. What I find particularly interesting is Duchamp's comments about the readymade in which he

⁴ Camfield, William. "Marcel Duchamp's Fountain: Aesthetic Object, Icon, or Anti-Art?" *The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp*. Ed. Thierry De Duve. Halifax: Scotia College of Art and Design, 1991. 166. Print.

explains his attitude and comments towards the art object, which were that the art object, despite his rejection of the word extended beyond traditional materials. In addition, as if finding a loophole in a contract Duchamp's gesture and use of an everyday found object would draw attention to the war on classification of low and high status objects. The following excerpts are from an interview between Bakewell and Duchamp showing the contradictory relationship to the art system and assumptions about art:

Bakewell: *"What you were also attempting to do was, I understand it was too devalue the art as an object, simply by saying if I say it's a work that makes it a work of art?"*

Duchamp: *"I don't care about the word art because it's been so...you know discredited and so forth"*

Bakewell: *"but you, you have in fact contributed to the discrediting quite deliberately?"*

Duchamp: *"Yes so, In a way I want to get rid of it because in a way like many people today have done away with religion, there is a sort of an unnecessary adoration of art today which I find unnecessary. And I think I don't know this is a difficult position because I've been in it all the time and still want to get rid of it you see... and it not and... I can't explain all I... everything I do because I do things or people do things and don't know why they do it..."⁵*

I interpret Duchamp's comments and interest in the everyday object as expressing frustration with the hierarchy of the gallery system, with higher status afforded to form and traditional materials. However he realized that by altering the everyday object ever so slightly it could remain a unique irregularity ultimately causing tension in a structured system. Duchamp's gesture of submitting a urinal for exhibition would be received with great resistance. In 1917, traditional mediums accustomed to sculpture such as stone and bronze were still held in the highest regard. Materials such as clay and wood were understood as something else, objects of craft and functional

⁵ Duchamp, Marcel Interview by Joan Bakewell." Late Night Line Up. BBC. BBC, London, 5 June 1968. Television.

handwork, and therefore relegated a lower status. The traditional way of defining the art object was still more exclusive than inclusive. Choosing a mass-produced object made of clay that we interact with in our everyday experience and isolating it in a gallery made the viewer aware of a relationship that exists.

Duchamp's comments about the readymade as an art object parallel Warhol's comments 40 years later, when asked about his own interpretation of a readymade discussing his work *Brillo box*. Arthur Coleman Danto an American art critic and philosopher born in 1924 recalls an interview with Warhol narrating the exchange in his writing,

In some footage used by documentary filmmaker Ric Burns, a female reporter interrogates the artist." Andy, she asks, "the Canadian government spokesman said that your art could not be described as original sculpture. Would you agree with that?" Warhol answers, "Yes" "Why do you agree?" "Well, because it's not original." "You have just then copied a common item?" "Yes." The interviewer gets exasperated. "Why have you bothered to do that? Why not create something new?" "Because it's easier to do." Well, isn't this sort of a joke and that you are playing on the public?" "No. It gives me something to do."⁶

These comments made by Warhol are very cheeky and ironic and to the average person may appear sarcastic and at times insincere. Warhol's tone is very similar to the tone used by Duchamp when questioned about the readymade. The fact is that the act of copying a mass-produced object creates an original sculpture. He is aware that his stance on the art object rests on the edge of traditional belief. Like Duchamp, Warhol enjoyed the back-and-forth and uneasiness his comments evoked when responding to his work. Also like Duchamp, he does not deny his reference to the readymade taking it one step further, deciding to remake the readymade. Warhol chose plywood as a material in a deliberate attempt to inject this low status materials into the gallery space, disguised as a

⁶ Danto, Arthur C. "Beyond The Brillo Box." *Andy Warhol*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2009. 70. Print.

readymade. Suggesting that Duchamp is being opportunistic, by inciting so much controversy, and therefore continuing this notion of disrupting perceptions of art in the meaning of everyday objects has become a strategy, for many artists since Duchamp, to attract public and media attention. Andy Warhol for example played with the media with an attraction to fame. Artists used a similar persona of the reclusive artist, which added to the intrigue that grew around their work. The idea that anything could be art was crucial in Duchamp's practice; however, Duchamp admits that he did submit to certain traditions in order to be taken seriously as an artist. Later on in his interview with Bakewell, Duchamp explains the difference between his objects and the identical object that occupies everyday space. Bakewell presses Duchamp to justify his reasoning for displaying a mass-produced object as art. Bakewell asks,

"If you are following through with your determination to devalue art what would happen if in fact these manufactured ready-mades were mass-produced and we could all buy one for two shillings? What would happen?"

Duchamp: *"You have to sign them! They are signed, they are signed and numbered in edition of eight each like any sculpture, so it's still in the realm of art. In the form of technique you just make eight and you sign them and number them. So that's the end of it... It should never have one more...even if you could find them in shops."*

Joan Bakewell: *"So, that in fact as far as that side of your own work's gone. The actual production and signing and selling of your work you have stayed very much in the accepted standards of the art work."*

Duchamp: *"Yes in fact I had too, because otherwise where would I be? I would be in an insane asylum probably."⁷*

Duchamp believes it is essential to sign and date the work, to draw a line of separation between low and high status objects. This candid contradiction seems necessary in order to sell his work and survive as an artist. Duchamp is altering the aura

⁷ Duchamp, Marcel Interview by Joan Bakewell." Late Night Line Up. BBC. BBC, London, 5 June 1968. Television.

of the object forcing it to be viewed outside the confines of its original context. As much as Duchamp was challenging the traditional definition of the art object, he still accepted aspects of sculptural traditions. He displayed and presented his work in series, including, limiting the production and signing each readymade. His work adhered to traditional display practices just enough to be taken seriously as an artist.

Duchamp believed that originality could not exist in the art world. The skill of the artist is reduced to his ability to combine forms. With Duchamp's gesture of a ceramic urinal, relocated as art the world of mass-produced objects could be viewed with fresh eyes as potential art materials. When first introduced, the initial debate did not concern the fact that the urinal was mass-produced, or that it was made of clay. Rather, as Camfield cites a story by Duchamp's friend Beatrice Wood, as she describes her visit to the gallery space prior to opening, revealing some insight into the initial controversy concerning the urinal.

"Two days before the exhibition opened, there was a glistening white object in the storeroom getting ready to be put on the floor. I can remember Walter Arensberg and George Bellows standing in front of it, arguing. Bellows was facing Walter, his body on a menacing slant, his fist doubled, striking at the air and anger. Out of curiosity, I approached."

"We cannot exhibit it," Bellows said hotly, taking on a handkerchief and wiping his forehead."

"We cannot refuse it, the entrance fee has been paid," gently answered Walter.

"It is indecent!" roared Bellows.

"That depends upon the point of view," added Walter, suppressing a grin.

"Someone must have sent it as a joke. It is signed R. Mutt; sounds fishy to me," grumbled Bellows with disgust. Walter approached the object in question and touched its glossy surface. Then with the dignity of a don addressing man at Harvard, he expounded: "a lovely form is been revealed, free from its functional purpose, therefore a man clearly has made an aesthetic contribution."...

"It is gross, offensive! There is such a thing as decency."

"Only in the eye of the beholder. You forget our bylaws."⁸

This account of Duchamp's gesture of placing a urinal in the gallery space shows how this everyday object pushed the boundary of taste and definition of the art object. However familiar enough to challenge conventional thinking regarding the art object as Danto adds, that the success of Duchamp's gesture relies just as much on his choice of such an anonymous object as Warhol made choosing the *Brillo* box explaining,

"It perhaps required something so antecedently resistant to absorption into the art world as a urinal, so as to call attention to the fact that it after all was already *in* the art world."⁹

Duchamp was the first to trigger a shift in thinking that allowed the mass produced objects to stand side-by-side traditional high status art objects. Krauss explains in the essay, *The Duchamp Effect*, how the urinal was able to challenge the modernist opinion of the art object.

"Duchamp went straight to the most primary conventions, the most elementary of all modernist artistic practices, namely that works of art are shown in order to be judged as such. He has taken this convention as subject matter, and he has submitted it to a radical test."¹⁰

The display of the urinal in a gallery allowed it to be *judged* and in turn elevated it to high status. The gray area separating low and high status objects became muddled allowing a completely new kind of art inside the gallery walls. The mass-produced object was no longer bound by its material properties. Krauss agrees that Duchamp's display of the mass produced has allowed these readymade objects traditionally associated as low status to now be considered high status art objects.

⁸ Ibid., 139.

⁹ Danto, Arthur C. "The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art." *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*. Ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. 15. Print.

¹⁰ Danto, Arthur C. "Echoes of the Readymade: Critique of Pure Modernism." *The Duchamp Effect*. Ed. Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon. Cambridge: MIT, 1996. 96. Print.

The readymade is not complete without the relationship the viewer brings to the experience. Duchamp was the first artist to question the relationship our culture has with the low status object. Jasper John's, Andy Warhol and Jeff Koons in their own practice continued what Duchamp had started in choosing to challenge the art world's view of the mass-produced. Danto believes Jeff Koons was the next significant artist to challenge the high status art object referencing the mass-produced, stating his essay *Banality and Celebration: the art of Jeff Koons* stating;

"If we think of art history as progressive in the way the history of sciences is. The conceptual development of art from Duchamp through to Koons is like the punctuated evolution of science from Galileo through Newton to Einstein."¹¹

Like Duchamp and Warhol, Koons was also able to question our relationship with the mass-produced form through his interest in kitsch. Danto adds;

"Koons has found a way of making high art out of low art--- but in a way that would have not been a possibility until the conceptual revolution of Duchamp and Warhol..."¹²

Koons practice is much like a hybrid of Warhol and Duchamp. Where Duchamp gave us the readymade and Warhol remade the readymade, Koons like Warhol collaborates with skilled artisans in order to manifest his objects. Like Duchamp, Koon's objects and their manifestation depend on the skill of the artisans, which is integral for the production of Koon's objects. Without this process, his objects would merely exist as idea. He explains how important process is in his works as he expresses his feelings during a consultation with the steelworker regarding the technical difficulties associated with casting;

"This liberating experience offered me as an artist the opportunity to go and create my own objects in such bodies of work as "Banality" where I did

¹¹ Danto, Arthur C. "Banality and Celebration: The Art of Jeff Koons." *Unnatural Wonders: Essays from the Gap between Art and Life*. New York: Columbia UP, 2007. 287. Print.

¹²Ibid., 287.

not work with direct ready-made objects, but create objects with a sense of ready-made inherent in them."¹³

Koons created sculpture through a process of craft. Although Koons is not solely responsible for the construction of his objects, he still considers them handmade. Danto describes the work that for him is an example of objects that embody a *sense* of a readymade, as Koon is described. Danto states;

"What Koons showed were new objects as contrasted with "used": in particular, bright new vacuum cleaners. Smart passersby, to the degree that they were prepared to see these as art, would have certainly seen them as ready-made and dismissed them as derivative from Marcel Duchamp."¹⁴

Like Duchamp and Warhol's readymades Koon's objects drew attention to the ordinary, everyday object. As Danto describes, Koon's display of a new readymade vacuum cleaner beside a used vacuum cleaner elevated the object outside its functional existence. Explaining how he saw them change;

"That is, they were more or less aesthetically unnoticeable when part of ordinary life much like inflatable plastic bunny..."¹⁵

Koon's works challenged the viewer's perception of the mass-produced as an art object. He implied that through experience with the readymade, this interaction creates a unique object, despite the visual similarities of the *inexperienced* vacuum cleaner. I would also like to mention the artist Jasper Johns, and specifically his series of painted bronze. Although the original inspiration for the painted bronze was a still life constructed by Johns, his work *Ale Cans* and reference to the readymade can be compared to the artists, previously mentioned. Fred Orton remarks in his book, *Figuring Jasper Johns* as he recalls his thoughts and those of a visitor to the exhibition;

¹³Ibid., 293.

¹⁴Ibid., 296.

¹⁵Ibid., 297.

“painted bronze has been referred to as a replica, but it isn't; the details of the label, for example, have been copied, but not exactly; the brushes, as one commentator put it, “seemed so perfect that it is hard to believe that they are not the originals”, but it is the very perfection of their preteen as painting that proves the lie of them.”¹⁶

This description sounds familiar, and I immediately think of Warhol's Brillo boxes. What differentiates Johns from Warhol, Duchamp and Koons is that Johns uses bronze, a traditional high status material and associates it with low status imagery. John's uses the everyday object, through altering the material of the everyday object like Warhol and Koons the commonplace is magnified, challenging traditional perceptions of the art object.

Orton makes some interesting remarks regarding his opinion of Jasper Johns *Ale Cans*, he goes on to explain how he sees all the attention paid to John's gesture of the painted bronze series;

“Maybe this is how we ought to respond to John sculptures. In which case, *Painted Bronze* might best be understood as a joke or decide that developed to an extent greater than painted bronze (*Ale Cans*), or any other individual piece did a centrality and importance that transcended the seriousness of its initial witness.”¹⁷

These disparaging remarks regarding the worthiness of John's gesture, and challenging the merits of its value as an art object, resonate with the resistance faced by Duchamp when introducing the urinal in the gallery space. Orton's critique implies that Johns was unaware of the conceptual significance of his work.

Warhol and Duchamp, Koon's and Johns were ultimately living in a new era where any medium or object could exist as an art object. As a sculptor, I use an

¹⁶ Orton, F. "Figuring Jasper Johns." *In Figuring Jasper Johns*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994. 47. Print

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.

unconventional sculptural medium when referencing the ready-made. This is similar to what Warhol did. What I find so interesting about the *Brillo* boxes is that this work challenged conventional thinking towards defining the high status art object by referencing the ready-made, previously suggested by Duchamp. However, like my own work, Warhol changed the medium as well as using imagery taken from the mass-produced world. By using wood like clay, he incorporated a sculptural technique that traditionally is not associated with high status objects.

I feel that my own work is similar to the *Brillo box* using a natural material and presenting it in a manufactured way. During the artistic process, I inadvertently invoke a sense of craftwork because of the traditions built around clay and ceramics. However, unlike Warhol and Koons who outsourced the fabrication of their work, to skilled artisans. I work directly with the material assuming the role of both artists and artisans. My experience and process as a manufacturer is isolating, structured and labour-intensive similar to industrial assembly line manufacturing. Upon first response like the *Brillo* boxes, my objects appear to be of known function.

Duchamp challenged the way we identify and define objects based on function. Duchamp's fountain can be seen today in contemporary galleries; however, the original urinal submitted was lost. The current urinal exists in reproduction as, Thierry De Duve, states in his essay,

The Richard Mutt Case,

"Duchamp's urinal, as we suspect from Beatrice Wood story, has vanished. All that remains are the replicas made by Sydney Janis in 1950, by Ulf Linde in 1963, and by Arthoro Schwarz in 1964, and also, of course, the photograph taken by Alfred Stieglitz."¹⁸

¹⁸ Duve, T D. "Given The Richard Mutt Case." *Kant after Duchamp*. London: The Mit Press, 1996. 95. Print.

It is interesting that the source of such a great controversy should just mysteriously disappear adding to its intrigue. Duchamp's *Fountain* will always exist, as an example of a moment in time when a single act destroyed conventional assumptions about art. However only in the nineteen sixties and seventies would Duchamp receive wide spread credit for such a bold move. Duchamp's ceramic urinal represented a shift in cultural thinking. De Duve, in his essay, *Given The Richard Mutt Case*, writes "*Fountain* was not the first of the ready-made's. On the contrary, it was one of the last "unassisted" ones."¹⁹ By removing the urinal from the context of the bathroom, this object now can be seen outside itself.

Andy Warhol's wood *Brillo box*, like Duchamp's ceramic urinal, was critical departures from acceptable art media and forms. He expresses his support for what I call Warhol's remade readymades. This remade readymade is similar to Duchamp's urinal in that the object originated from the world of mass production. However, it is also different in that Warhol chose to alter the medium when he introduced his interpretation of a *remade* readymade. During time as a gallery facilitator at the Mackenzie art gallery, I could spend hours visually dissecting Warhol's *Brillo box*. I began to notice tiny imperfections and anomalies and came to appreciate these objects as sculpture. As much as each box is similar, they are all unique and no two boxes are alike. For example, from a distance this formation would in fact appear to be a pile of boxes. However, all traces of function that existed have been removed. There are no handles and the objects have been sealed from top to bottom all intentionally left in what Warhol believed would detach this ready-made object from its function. The very object that has been the course of much

¹⁹ Ibid, 96.

debate, throughout art history, had in fact also originated from the so-called commercial artist. Danto points out that;

"The original designer of the *Brillo box* of those years, James Harvey, in fact, was a failed second-generation abstract expressionist who went into commercial art ... It was a bitter irony for him that Warhol, in 1964, should simply have carried the *Brillo box* across the line that was believed so strong in 1954..."²⁰

Warhol blatantly disregarded the forbidden nature of using imagery, objects or process from the commercial realm the *Brillo box* was similar to Duchamp's purchase and alteration of a commercially produced urinal. In his essay titled *The Artworld* published in the Journal of Philosophy, October 15, 1964, Danto states,

"Mr. Andy Warhol, the pop artist, displays facsimiles of Brillo cartons, piled high, in neat stacks, as in the stockroom of the supermarket. They happen to be of wood, painted to look like cardboard, and why not? To paraphrase the critics of the *Times*, if one may make the facsimile of a human being out of bronze, why not the facsimile of a Brillo cartons out of plywood?"²¹

Warhol's *Brillo box* is not seen as a plywood box, rather sculpture resisting the need to be defined by its material properties. Because of artists such as Duchamp and Warhol, in my own work, objects are re-created in a medium foreign to traditional sculpture. In doing so removing, any function of manufacturing materials such as steel, wood and plastic. Like Warhol's *Brillo box* that are pretending to be something they are not, despite looking similar, creating objects no longer bound by their material properties.

²⁰ Danto, Arthur C. "Beyond The Brillo Box." *Andy Warhol*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2009. 154. Print.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Danto, Arthur C. "The Artworld." *Pop Art: A Critical History*. Ed. S H Madoff. Berkeley: University of California, 1997. 272. Print.

Danto again refers to the *Brillo box* attempting to defuse the issue that art critics have taken with Andy Warhol's use of low status materials in his work. He states,

"Warhol's were made out of plywood and the others of cardboard. But even if things were reversed, matters would have remained philosophically altered, leaving it then an option that really *no* material differences need distinguish the art work from the real thing."²²

Danto appears to believe that Warhol's boxes being as made out of plywood should have no bearing on them being judged as high or low object. I agree with Danto the conversation would be the same, and that the material should have no bearing on the validity of an art object. The reality is works such as Warhol's *Brillo* boxes and Duchamp's urinal force the viewer to question the very definition they use to define a work of art. Mediums are no longer bound by traditional craft history. In his book *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, Danto again remarks:

"I find myself wanting to think of *Brillo* box as possessing a kind of soul, admittedly imperceptible since its counterparts, lacking souls, look exactly like it."²³

Danto's assessment of the *Brillo box* and belief that the object emanates some sort of aura is very similar to Walter Benjamin's thoughts concerning the art object in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Benjamin's focus was primarily the performing arts, such as film and media. However, he does describe how this new age of reproduction disrupted tradition and altered the art experience. Benjamin discusses the idea of authenticity with respect to the art object in the age of mechanical reproduction and what he believes has been challenged through this process of reproduction.

²² Danto, Arthur C. Preface. *Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*. By Danto. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981. N. pag. Print.

²³ Danto, Arthur C. "Philosophizing Literature." *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. 178. Print.

"One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced."²⁴

As Benjamin described what is jeopardized "is the authority of the object."²⁵

However, he also believes that through reproduction the art object can still exist embodied with a new quality and as Benjamin describes *aura*, unique to the viewer. Warhol's objects like my own work are reproductions of the mass-produced, mimicking this *authority* and aura that Benjamin describes. Author T.J. Demos has an interesting opinion on the effect of Duchamp's fountain and the influence it had on cultivating new ideas surrounding the high status art object. Demo's makes an interesting observation:

"It is true that the readymade's achievement was not only to announce the impoverishment of auratic originality in the face of mass production, but also to disrupt it by isolating a manufactured object and giving it a new meaning, endowing it with a "new thought." *Fountain* freed the urinal from the straitjacket of functionality and allowed it to wander conceptually and associate with unexpected ideas."²⁶

Duchamp's choice of a ceramic urinal is interesting, specifically the idea that it allowed clay the opportunity to be associated as a high status medium. Demos, suggests Duchamp recognized the aura that exists surrounding the mass produced object. The art object is now able to extend far beyond the inherited traditions of display and discourse. The category of ready-made essentially eliminates the great divide separating form from function. Demos explain what occurs when mass-produced objects are removed from everyday experiences, and displayed in the gallery space.

²⁴ Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*, selections from *The Work Of Art: In The Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. New York: Schocken, 1969. 221-222. Print

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Demos, T J. "Sculptures for Traveling." *The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp*. London: Mit Press, 2007. 82. Print.

My work evokes the question of the readymade by altering the medium of the readymade however, I remain the artisan and my objects incorporate the found readymade object. Danto concludes his opinion on Warhol's *Brillo box* and the impact it had on challenging traditional beliefs regarding medium of high status.

My own work is much like the Brillo boxes by re-creating the ready-made with clay and removing the function. The form is altered forever separated from the context in which it was conceived. To summarize the attitudes towards the art object during the 1960s Danto reminded me of a story that I used to tell gallery patrons when I was touring the Warhol retrospective exhibition.

"In early 1965, an art dealer attempted to import 80 of the boxes into Canada, but ran into difficulty with Canadian customs. As sculpture, they would have entered duty-free, but customs considered them merchandise and demanded an important tax of \$4000... The matter was referred to Charles Comfort, director of the national Gallery of Canada, who agreed with customs after being shown some photographs of the grocery boxes. "I could see," he said, " that they were not sculpture."²⁷

With this attitude coming from a place with such prestige as The National Gallery of Canada, it becomes apparent how controversial Warhol's work would have been to the long storied tradition of display within the gallery space. However, without this event in history, maybe the boundary would have never been pushed beyond the status quo. Tracing back the history of Warhol and Duchamp, one can see how artists such as these were seen as radical and unconventional. Nevertheless, time and reflection have shown us that these moments through the course of art history have been instrumental in redefining art. Danto agrees that the connection between Duchamp's urinal and Warhol's Brillo boxes is apparent and explains the similarities and differences between them.

²⁷ Ibid., 69.

"One possible advantage of seeing art in the widest context, we can manage is, at least in the present case, that it helps us with a rather narrow problem of differentiating between Duchamp's readymades and such pop works as Warhol's *Brillo box*. Whatever he achieved, Duchamp was not celebrating the ordinary. He was, perhaps, diminishing the aesthetic and testing the boundaries of art. There really is, in history, no such thing as having done something before. That there is an outward resemblance between Duchamp and pop is one of the things that is the achievement of pop to help us see through. The resemblances are far less striking the nose between *Brillo box* and the ordinary Brillo cartons. What makes a difference between Duchamp and Warhol is similarly far less difficult to state and what is the difference between art and reality."²⁸

What I find particularly interesting about the historical significance of Duchamp's urinal is that the author is actually each one of us. Duchamp recognized the disconnect that society had adopted towards the mass-produced. The display of the urinal has become less about function and more a reflection of the society that created it.

This interaction is what has allowed Duchamp's urinal to challenge this category of high and low status. The urinal once removed from the system of pipes is no longer defined by its function. My objects are inspired by the urinal repurposing clay against low status tradition; they become organic representations with implied purpose, challenging the idea of clay as a low status object. The results of Duchamp's display of the urinal as I have discussed has been the acceptance of not only the readymade object as high status but also clay. Through my reading, I found it interesting that the material of Duchamp's urinal is rarely discussed. Because of its function, the material itself became overshadowed. With such little attention paid to the fact that Duchamp's urinal was made of clay, the gallery space was forever changed allowing clay to be judged alongside traditional high status mediums such as bronze, gold and stone.

²⁸ Danto, Arthur C. "Pop Art and Past Futures." *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997. 132. Print.

Architecture Fragmented

Understanding how Duchamp was able to alter the status of the readymade in the art world, we need look no further than to our everyday experiences with plumbing. There are unseen spaces behind the walls of our architecturally built world where we realize the vital role these arrangements play in sustaining our everyday experience. The plumbing is the vehicle to staying alive allowing us to perform rituals in order to remain sanitized. Without plumbing, our very existence would be compromised by lack of hygiene. These junctions, connections, and fragments all complete a system that has been covered and painted over. Why do we deny ourselves a fully completed experience within the space? Our everyday experiences with architectural spaces are often overlooked when structures are designed with only efficiency and capacity in mind. During 1917 the toilet and modern plumbing were still seen as a novelty in homes. The relationship that developed out of modernist architecture mingled culture and the ready-made in very close quarters. The ironic nature of a urinal is that during some point in the fabrication, this so-called readymade is in fact a handmade object. Similar to the ready-made once fired the clay is not itself, merely a reflection of its natural state. Clay like the ready-made has shared a similar experience through the course of art history, having been relegated to the sidelines and neglected in the gallery space.

Lawrence Wright explains in his chapter plumber's progress in his book, *Clean And Decent: The Fascinating History of the Bathroom and the WC*,

"Fireclay sanitary fittings were formerly made by building up on a mould by hand. Correct thickness depended entirely on the skill of the operator. About 1906, such tricky handwork was eliminated with the introduction of casting."²⁹

²⁹ Wright, L. "Plumber's Progress." *Clean and Decent*. London: Routledge, 1960. 238. Print.

A ceramicist, in 1917 would sculpt a clay relief. Once the desired clay form was achieved balancing form and function they would proceed to casting a plaster mould. This plaster cast would then be the negative space, allowing a thin layer of porcelain slip to be poured into the cast. This step would be repeated multiple times until the desired thickness of the urinal was achieved. The mould would then be separated and the casting released, the clay would then be fired in a kiln. Wright recalls just how technically challenging the process would have been requiring the most skilled ceramicist. Explaining the next stage in the process of casting ceramic toilets and bathtubs stating,

“These are then baked serially in tunnel kilns, like loaves. They emerge appreciably smaller, and with changes in their shape which the designer must foresee: hence his preference for curves rather than straight lines.”³⁰

A ceramicist would understand that clay is in constant motion throughout this process until it has been fired in the kiln. Repeating the casting process would allow the handmade object to be multiplied and mass-produced. Our social conditioning to the presence of this object has led us to ignore its formal presence in our architectural spaces. This has led us to view the mass-produced as merely a functional means to solving a problem.

Helen Molesworth describes in her essay *Bathrooms and Kitchens: Cleaning house with Duchamp*. With the arrival of the industrial revolution and a new personal relationship with the ready-made object set the stage for Duchamp's urinal to challenge this high low status in the art world. She explains,

“Increasing mechanization occurred in domestic space at an extra ordinary pace from the turn of the century through its first two decades. During this period, the average North American home took in a barrage of lightweight

³⁰ Ibid.

machinery, from eggbeaters to vacuum cleaners. In addition, the home was re-structured around water availability in order to incorporate standardized plumbing, was wired for electricity, saw the rise of centralized heating, and experienced the introduction of the telephone."³¹

What surprises me about this evolution in domestic living was the lack of resistance and acceptance of readymade object as a positive step forward in domestic living. Duchamp was able to recognize this cultural modernist shift and used the urinal to challenge the very category of the low status objects. Helen Molesworth explains how quickly this shift happened "Because domestic machines have now been absorbed into the fabric of daily life, the moments of engagement between bodies have become...common."³² Plumbing was the future in the 1920's and the urinal was a product of this new domestic space. This relationship between man and machine was set in motion with the increasing cultural demand for these objects. Without the acceptance of this shift in modernist architecture Duchamp's urinal would not have been able to challenge the status of the readymade object. However, Lawrence Wright adds,

"Soon after the first World War enormous numbers of "enamelled sanitary fixtures" (mainly baths and wash basins) were being turned out: in the two years from 1921 in the USA the annual number rose from 2,400,000 to 4,800,000."³³

Modern architecture was now being constructed in a direct response to the demand for modern plumbing. Prior to this Duchamp's urinal, removed from its context and displayed in the gallery space would still have been seen as unfamiliar to the general public. During the 1920s what was seen as the future in modern living was also subject to criticism. My interest is in architectural space and the lifestyle we have become

³¹ Molesworth, H. "Bathrooms and Kitchens: Cleaning House With Duchamp." *Plumbing: Sounding Modern Architecture*. Ed. N Lahiji and D S Friedman. New York: Princeton, 1997. 77. Print.

³² *Ibid.*, 83.

³³ Wright, L. "Millions of Baths." *Clean and Decent*. London: Routledge, 1960. 258. Print.

accustomed to, at the same time exposing and exploring these spaces to fully embrace and understand the role the *structure* plays in our everyday life. I will explore how the fragments of modern architectural design have both positive and negative elements.

We all take advantage of the infrastructure that supports the lifestyle offered since the advance of modern architecture. Specifically the objects that at one time functioned, however, have now become obsolete. In the film *Brazil*³⁴ the setting is a society where the infrastructure has all been converted and controlled by a government agency. Director Terry Gilliam suggests a dystopic future where information is the key to a civilized society, and controlling the infrastructure forces the individual to become dependent on government. The renegade plumber played by Robert DeNiro, represents the possible consequences the future could hold as our dependence on machines continues to advance in the 21st century. The film, *Brazil*, exposes the unexposed, the internal organs of a building that snake their way up and down the walls, ceiling and floor are a constant reminder of our dependence on the ready-made object.

Modern architecture has sanitized these spaces with their push to hide the inner parts that support the structure. What began as a shift in the 1920's by architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier would, end up influencing a century of architecture that has evolved through style, while, its principles and foundation remain unchanged. What I find interesting about the modernist movement that originated from the vision these two architects had is every aspect of the structure plays a role in creating a space that frames the everyday experience. I find it interesting that there were others who also found this shift towards modern architecture problematic at the time. As I will show, I

³⁴ *Brazil*. Dir. Terry Gilliam. Perf. Johathan Pryce , Robert De Niro ,Michael Palin. Universal, 1985. DVD.

have researched a range of writing that address my concerns and ultimately support my theory that early modernist architects choose to hide the internal structure rather than expose these systems. .

Donald Kunze best describes the feeling I get when I enter into an architectural space. He is summarizing three main principles concerning architectural perception. His second principle about space, I found most interesting when thinking about architecture and space.

Each kind of space has its own terms of measure, and the wonder is that, for any given location, human beings, who have the ability to see things from many different points of view, can seem to live in the same space, conceived as a commonplace and even more remarkable that the idea of living in a single world is not only thinkable but sometimes unavoidable necessity.³⁵

Architecture is designed in a way that it is predisposed to appeal to the masses. It does not invite you to scratch the surface and look beyond the walls. Kunze describes *living* as almost strictly dependent on the relationship we develop with architectural spaces. Understanding the relationship, we have with the components that sustain the infrastructure of buildings, influences my work.

Another example of the idea of architecture being designed in a way that influences our everyday experience can be seen when looking at the theory of pragmatics as it relates to architecture. Ralph Waldo Emerson had an interesting opinion on the effects the architectural structure had on culture and society. As Andrew Ballantyne describes in his biography of Emerson,

Emerson looks for the cause behind superficial appearances, and finds them in the hands that put up the buildings, and in the will that guides

³⁵ Kunze, Donald. "Poche." *Plumbing: Sounding Modern Architecture*. Ed. N Lahiji and D S Friedman. New York: Princeton, 2007. 137. Print.

the hands. In order to understand the culture is not enough to describe its buildings, but one wants to know about the impulse that drove people to build them. These volitions, acting in different directions, balanced against one another, or working together in the same direction, are held in relation that could be called the society's ethos. The circles that radiate out from these values are secondary and tertiary productions of the ethics that lies at the culture heart, producing the ways of living, and the material culture of the society as a set of consequences and byproducts of the life of the community.³⁶

Emerson's assessment of the architectural structure and believe that buildings are like sculptures with the mark of the artist, consisting of the arrangement of ready-made objects. Structures are not inanimate objects; I believe like Emerson that culture and specifically the individual are constantly being influenced by their interactions within architectural spaces. Emerson's opinions on architecture and spaces are very similar to Richard Rorty. Rorty is one of many scholars who have studied the theme of pragmatics. I am more interested, however, in how this applies to the design and construction within an architectural space. What makes this theory interesting is that despite size, sophistication and location, all structures share a common theme.

The great appeal of pragmatist aesthetics for anyone interested in architecture, is that it takes everyday experience and the basis from which to extrapolate. If architecture is concerned with the lives that attaches, and the kinds of life that become possible because it is there, then the centrality of this everyday experience feels right and proper in a discussion of architecture. There are, to be sure, special architectural experiences that deserve to be grouped with the kinds of experience that one has when confronting a work of art in a museum, but most often, what we need from the building is for it to give an appropriate frame and support for our everyday habits.³⁷

Rorty seems to suggest that the spaces behind the wall are just as important as the façade of the structure as he refers to the *frame*. Rorty adds "these habits make the

³⁶ Emerson, Ralph W. "Section 2 Groundwork." *Architecture Theory: A Reader in Philosophy and Culture*. Ed. Andrew Ballantyne. London: Continuum, 2005. 33 Print.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

structure of our lives and our identities, and so they assume a personal important..."³⁸

These support systems are the foundation that allows our everyday habits to exist.

Architects nevertheless are concerned more with concealing the frame using the facades in an attempt to create unique structures. Still behind the walls, exist the same network of mass-produced objects found in all structures that allow our everyday experience to take place. The *architectural experience* as Rorty describes cannot exist without this mutual relationship between a structure and the nervous system behind the walls without one, the other cannot exist. These spaces isolated behind the walls, although unseen are always in relation to our everyday experience. He agrees that the structure plays an important role shaping the people who inhabit these spaces.

Looking at the author Samuel Butler and his writing *The Book of the Machines* I found myself interested, in Butler's opinions on just how close our relationship is with the machine. It is amazing to think that the relationship we have with machines has become such common practice it becomes second nature. However, during the context of time of Butler's writing it would have been met with great scepticism, seen as science fiction, reaching thousands of years into the future. What I found most compelling and relevant to my interest in the inner workings that make up our architectural spaces, was Butler's vision of a society where we live in tandem with machines. He states,

That man will be the ruling spirit and machine the servant; that as soon as the machine fails to discharge the service command expects from it, it is doomed to extinction... They owe their very existence and progress to their ministry to human wants, and must therefore both now and ever demand inferiors.³⁹

³⁸ Ibid., 33.

³⁹ Butler, Samuel. "The Book of The Machines." *Architecture Theory: A Reader in Philosophy and Culture*. Ed. Andrew Ballantyne. London: Continuum, 2005. 131. Print.

This quote reminds me of a salvage yard an abandoned building or a graveyard, where the discarded machine is laid to rest. Butler again enforces just how close he foresaw our relationship with machines and expressed the consequences that he believed would be inevitable if we were suddenly forced apart from our everyday experience with this readymade world. He adds

If all machines were to be annihilated at one moment, so that not a knife nor a lever nor rag of clothing, nor anything whatsoever were left to man, but his bare body alone that he was born with, and if all knowledge of mechanical laws were taken from him so that he could not make no more machines, and all machine-made food destroyed so that the race of man should be left as it were naked upon a desert island, we should become extinct in six weeks.⁴⁰

He paints a very bleak existence without this relationship; however, I believe he was able to understand that the more closely the relationship between the individual and the machine was pursued that this bond could never be broken. I understand how reading Butler's work, you get the sense that we have enslaved ourselves to the machine. I think it is important to add Butler's opinions on the effects of the readymade object with respect to the building and architectural spaces. This trend that Butler talks constantly about, wanting more from our readymade machines embracing the new discarding the old, shows just how dependent we have become on the readymade. We seem to be too quick to discard what we perceive as obsolete.

I am going to focus most of my attention on Le Corbusier, and how his designs influenced 20th century architecture. I think it is important to note that Le Corbusier, while being an accomplished architect began his career and throughout his life practiced as a painter. What I find compelling about the life of Le Corbusier was his influence on architecture as a whole. Le Corbusier was always open to new possibilities as an artist

⁴⁰ Ibid., 132.

and this played a significant role in allowing this new modern idea to take place. Peter Blake remarks in his writing on Le Corbusier in his book *The Master Builders*, he discusses early on at the time these architects were going against the grain of conventional thinking,

The important thing to these men was the development of a new static language, and specifically a language that could be used to deal with the problems of today. In utilitarian buildings and products they found a static vocabulary cubes, spheres, cylinders, cones, and so fourth. In their purity and precision, these objects... represented a "new look" the look of what was later termed Machine Art. It was an exhilarating experience, the discovery of this vast new world of form.⁴¹

I find it very interesting how Le Corbusier found great inspiration in unseen spaces in his attempts to extrapolate completely new everyday experience, specifically Machine Art and his attitude towards these forms as not only readymade but viewing them as art objects as well.

Continuing to explore the attitude and opinions of Le Corbusier, I am interested in his opinions and definition regarding the structure of a house. He remarks "a house is a machine for living in"⁴² this quote has been interpreted many ways, and as Blake sees it "a house should be as beautiful as a machine," Blake's opinion regarding Le Corbusier's structures. Le Corbusier understood the power that architecture had in suggesting and implementing a new way of living at the expense of the ready-made object. Blake is very adamant in his belief that Le Corbusier understood that the everyday experience hinged on the individuals interaction in this new modern architectural space. It should be noted that during the course of Blake's writing he refers to the Le Corbusier as Corbu.

⁴¹ Blake, Peter. "Corbusier and the Mastery of Form." *The Master Builders*. New York: W.W. Norton&Company, 1976. 16. Print.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 25.

"The city as a whole was architecture: it is basic organization, its spatial relationships, its forms, its level of activity, its heart all these seem to Corbu of supreme significance..."⁴³

Blake and Le Corbusier understood just how far-reaching architectural space has on an individual's everyday experience. Blake concludes his view and assessment of Le Corbusier's buildings and spaces making comparisons to art and artwork.

"A painting can exist in a vacuum the creation of a solitary artist, to be seen and felt only by him. Most buildings cannot; they invariably impinge upon some segment of society, however small. Architecture is so powerful a medium, so potent a "persuader" that it will always be a force for something a force for order, for chaos, or perhaps, simply for more dreary indifference."⁴⁴

Blake's opinion concerning the influence of architectural spaces on everyday experience sees structures more as guiding the individuals experience rather than existing as an inanimate collection of forms in space. Continuing to investigate the interior spaces within architecture, I cannot help but think of the bathroom as a better place to understand the relationship between our everyday experience and this framework. The formal arrangement of plumbing is addressed in the essay by William W Braham, titled *Siegfried Gideon and the Fascination of the Tub*. Braham discusses that we need to embrace and not deny ourselves the full visual experience that is so often hidden behind the walls. His opinion towards this space is best described as he states,

We continue to build rooms with tubs virtually identical to those of the three-fixture configuration that was standardized around 1920, and from that perspective, we remain thoroughly modern and thoroughly American. In other words, our reconciliation with the modern world not be complete

⁴³ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁴ Blake, Peter. *Prospect. The Master Builders*. New York: W.W. Norton&Company, 1976. 417. Print.

⁴⁴ Braham, William W. " Siegfried Giedon and the Fascination of the Tub." *Plumbing: Sounding Modern Architecture*. Ed. N Lahiji and D S Friedman. New York: Princeton, 1997. 201. Print.

until we have understood the compulsion to sustain that particularly efficient and secretive configuration.⁴⁵

I take this as a strong sign that Braham believes the bathroom and surrounding infrastructure is a very personal and physical experience. He affirms my suspicion that this standardization inspired by architecture in the 1920s has played a crucial role in shaping our everyday experience. He believed that individual is being shaped by their everyday experiences with form in architectural space.

“His essential proposition was that historical relationships could be more easily read in the humble things, in tools and artifacts of use like the bathtub...”⁴⁶

I agree with his summarization of Giedon and believe he was aware of the power architecture had in influencing the everyday experience. Specifically, what interests me the most is Gideon's thoughts surrounding everyday objects. Continuing to look at the bathroom and the writing of Gideon I find myself drawn again to his definition of hygiene. Clay, plumbing and the bathroom have a long historical relationship. Gideon explains,

The rule of hygiene is not a rule about comfort, but about the very presence of water. Bathroom finishes must resist the accelerated tendency of matter to change state under the influence of water, slipping out of the forms into which it has been worked. Keeping during water in their place and removing any trace of their presence is a strategy for preserving the artifacts conceived by the architectural imagination. The glazed surface of the tub and of the tiled walls in the sanitized room of fixtures is, or nearly so, requiring little of the regenerative maintenance demanded by other materials. These are the material qualities by which the hygienic order is understood and exercised in everyday constructions like the tub.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ibid., 205.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 219.

What became the modern bathroom was this idea of hygiene and in order to achieve this state was to incorporate plumbing and fixtures into architectural spaces. This idea of a space that deals primarily in filth, dirt and excrement is a space where we all make ourselves vulnerable. Without this shared experience with plumbing and its fixtures based on Gideon's description, we would lose the very foundation architects established stepping into the modern age.

In my practice, clay captures the conditions that the everyday object faces when displayed in the gallery space. My objects force the ready-made into an unnatural representation of itself, giving each object a unique presence in my attempts to articulate my own definition of how using clay challenges the mass produced ready-made.

Duchamp's urinal enabled us to consider and understand the relationships we have with the readymade object. For example, the systems found in offices, apartments, and shopping malls – which might be considered as a 'digestive' aesthetic all arrangements of mass-produced objects. The essential plumbing, wiring, heat ducts, and vents that are often overlooked during the course of everyday experiences. Duchamp's urinal is an example of just how complex our relationship is with the everyday object. Does the infrastructure frame not only the physical space within a building, and the individual's everyday experience influenced by the mass-produced? My objects combine elements from these mass-produced objects that are hidden or ignored in everyday experiences in urban spaces. Using clay a non ready-made, my objects explore this idea further, creating a visual urban artefact, which mimics the mass-produced. In my own work, influence comes from the world around us, and I believe art extends beyond the gallery walls.

Duchamp merely recognized the power of this relationship that exists and chose to challenge the art world. Choosing to display these low status readymade objects Duchamp, Warhol, Koons and Johns bridged the divide between low and high status objects. The act of questioning the very categories and value systems we place on objects gives the readymade the footing it needs to survive in the art world.

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Fig. 1. Duchamp, Marcel. *Fountain*, 1917. Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco.
ARTstor. Web. 11 July. 2012.



Fig. 2. Warhol, Andy. *Brillo box (Soap Pads)*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. ARTstor. Web. 11 July. 2012.

JEFF KOONS, *New Hoover Convertibles, Shelton Wet/Dry Doubledecker*, 1981-86, Acrylic, fluorescent lights, 2 Hoover Convertible Vacuum Cleaners & 1 Shelton We/Dry 99 c 41" x 29". Courtesy Daniel Weinberg Gallery Right, *Two Ball Total Equilibrium Tank*, 1985, Glass, Iron, Water, Basketballs. Courtesy International With Monument

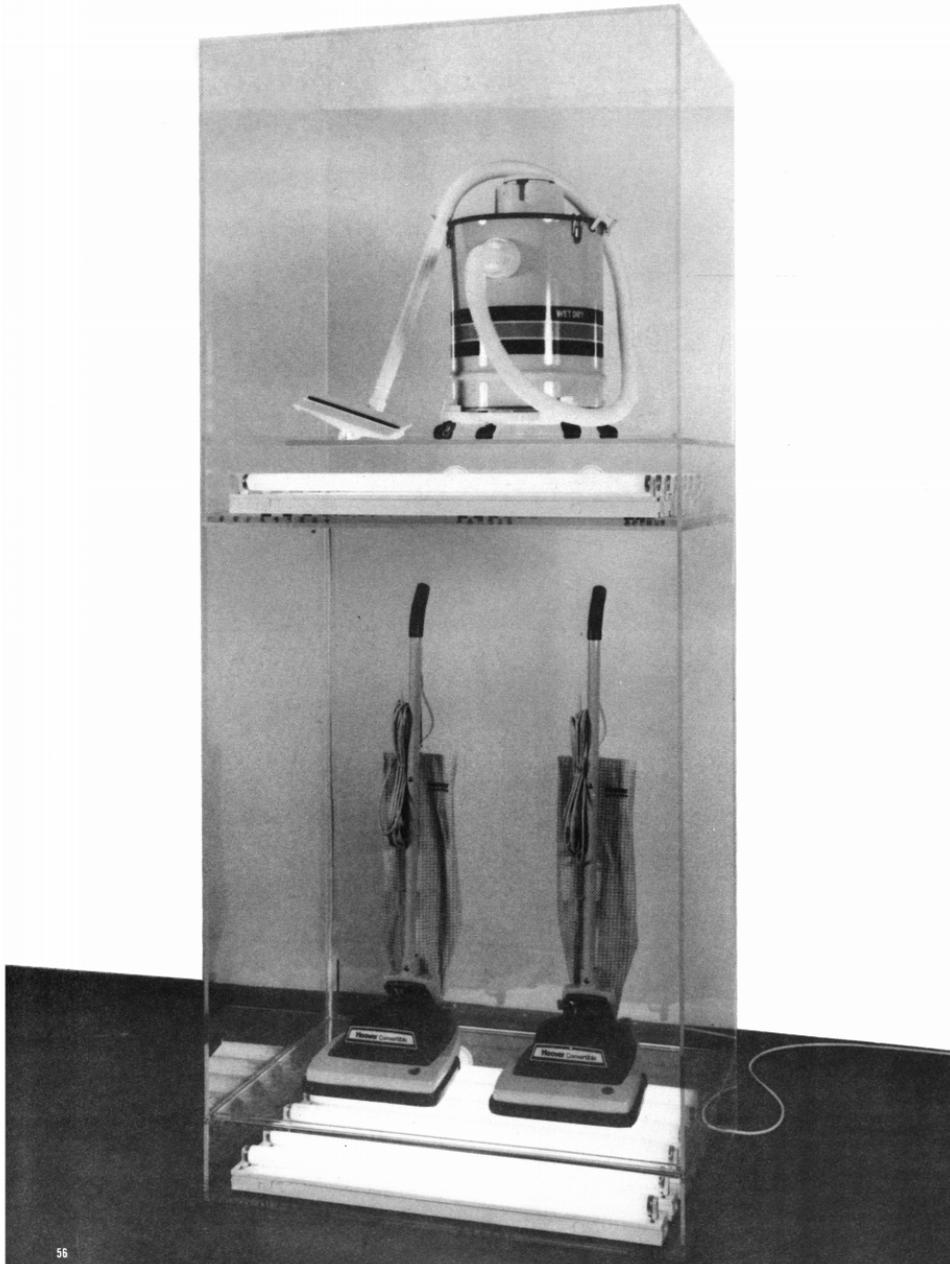


Fig. 3. Koons, Jeff. *New Hoover Convertibles, Shelton wet/dry Doubledecker*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 July. 2012.



Jeff Koons, *Rabbit* (1986)

Fig. 4. Koons, Jeff. *Rabbit*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
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Fig. 5. Johns, Jasper. *Painted Bronze (Beer Cans)*. University of California, San Diego. ARTstor. Web. 11 July. 2012.



Fig. 6. Porcina, Mark. *Manufacturer*. Le Petit Trianon, Lethbridge. 23 September. 2012.



Fig. 7. Porcina, Mark. *Manufacturer*. Le Petit Trianon, Lethbridge. 23 September. 2012.



Fig. 8. Porcina, Mark. *Manufacturer*. Le Petit Trianon, Lethbridge. 23 September. 2012.



Fig. 9. Porcina, Mark. *Manufacturer*. Le Petit Trianon, Lethbridge. 23 September. 2012.



Fig. 10. Porcina, Mark. *Manufacturer*. Le Petit Trianon, Lethbridge. 23 September. 2012.