

Flint Jamison "Veneer" at Air de Paris, Romainville

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Flint Jamison "Veneer" at Air de Paris, Romainville. Courtesy: the artist and Air de Paris, Romainville. Photo: Marc Damage

An artist devoted to materializing all aspects of production is often lonely, driven by questions familiar and unfamiliar to the art world. Flint Jamison's materialist approach goes as far as planning for its leftover materials. Like, did you know that the wood Jamison used to construct *Opportunity Zone* (2019) comes from the leftover cedar of *Footer/Content Chassis/This Pull Request* (2017), as does *Opportunity Zone (In Neighboring Metals)* (2021)? Jamison's archive carries what is unused into the proceeding project not simply out of a sense of environmental ethics, but out of concern for narrative clarity.

Jamison catalogues his archive according to the allotment of used material, rather than solely its aesthetic rationale. The material provenance of the cedar begins with Jamison's *Footer/Content Chassis/This Pull Request* (2017) for the Whitney Biennial, a sculpture and program that actualized the inner workings of the museums' surveillance and labor apparatus; from there it was carried into *Opportunity Zone* (2019), where in residence in Switzerland and then in his US studio, the artist created three sculptures using photogrammetry: first of Oakland's Ghost Ship warehouse, then Portland's Yale Union, and most recently Paris' Romainville. Each site served as a marker of gentrification and transition that formed and forms the artist and his community. In 2021, the last of the wood batch, in conjunction with aluminum, was utilized to construct *Opportunity Zone (In Neighboring Metals)*, to be installed at Air de Paris.

In addition to this new piece, Jamison will be showing a work based on Marcel Duchamp's *Glider, Containing a Water Mill In Adjacent (Neighboring) Metals*, (1915), and a 1937 commission he received from Andre Breton, to create an doorway/aperture for Breton's gallery *GraDiva*. In this work, Jamison inverts the gallery's signage in cedar, carving "GraDiva" into an enclosed box, so that the sign becomes trapped and held together by concrete column forming clamps used in the construction of new buildings.

As the father of the readymade and credited as the author of the most important modern art of all time ¹, Duchamp is a useful adversary for historical materialists. Duchamp's works are most often mistakenly placed in a European, "color-blind" space ², even though the majority of his most well known readymades, from *Fountain* (1917) to *Glider, Containing a Water Mill In Adjacent (Neighboring) Metals*, 1915, were created in New York City, with the support and aid of his patrons Walter and Louise Arensberg ³

New York City in 1915, 1917 was far from racially integrated. Forty percent of New York City's residents were former slave-holders, and the United States was, as the United States is now, without neutral grounds. Segregation filled all public and private arenas. However, when the invention of the readymade is discussed, questions like: found where? Found how? In what context? In which neighborhood? Questions like: how does the segregation of public and private sanitation spaces, such as water fountains and bathrooms, the segregation of the city, contextualize the politics of the found form? rarely enter the analysis. By transposing Duchamp's water wheel painting with the blueprints of forced gentrification, Jamison's *Opportunity Zone (In Neighboring Metals)* perforates the dematerialization of the readymade.

In the Duchampian lexicon of found and readymade, it has been normalized that the process of coming up with the idea is separated from the making of the work, which is removed from the process of installing the piece, all of which is subsumed under the name of the person who is credited as the artist. Production is outsourced, divided and individuated. In opposition to this ideology, Jamison's practice tends to the labor process, and to the materialization of what capital makes invisible. And in this, Jamison knows where his materials come from, how they are sourced, and is involved in every aspect of their making. . When things need to be glued, he glues, when things need to be coded, programmed, cut, he operates the machinery. The people who work the laser cutters, routers, those involved in the machine's operations are honored and credited with the making. His art strains against normative practices of artist as CEO, artist as the manager of others, towards the familiar and unfamiliar space of artist as alienated worker, artist in contradiction and community. Here, the artist rejects the modernist labor processes that divides, outsources then erases the materials and names of those involved in the making, and prompts us to do the same.

Devotees of the white avant-garde tradition may respond, stating that Jamison's practice partakes in an older tradition of art mythology that fetishizes the artist's hand. Protectors of neoliberal capitalism may even try to argue that it does not matter who makes what, and offer fragmented readings of Barthes and Foucault. These are predictable and underwhelming takes, expected responses by keepers of the status quo. I would respond that Jamison's dedication to the material is predicated upon something older and more sacred than adherence to the fandom of the artist genius. Jamison's materialist fixation is part of a tradition of heretics committed to visualizing the operations of power, whatever its shape and form. Sometimes it's called Capital or Empire. Sometimes it is called Home, Love, Beauty: Art. The artist's focus speaks to a deep and long history of committed materialists who refuse the aestheticization of violence, who labor to visualize how aestheticization works too often as the dematerialization of power. The stories that divide skilled from unskilled labor are the same ones that divide the artist from those unnamed, and those fictions become the untruths repeated about the lives deemed worthy and unworthy.

The stories currently afforded to the production of aesthetics parallel the naturalization of violence that becomes this world. In this space we break from the realm that dissociates thinking and dreaming from making and doing, where an exclusive election basket in safety and fantasy, where artists believe their function is the managerial ordering of others around: You either spend your life emulating this presence as victory or you uncover all the ways in which it lives so that it can die. We break from this narrative fallacy to tend to the rehearsal of interdependence, attachment: more. Here Jamison brings us to the composition of solicitude and the invitation for more.

— Eunsong Kim

At Air de Paris, Romainville
until December 9, 2021