

ADMIT EVERYONE

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

University of Waterloo Art Gallery
East Campus Hall 1239

Tuesday to Saturday 12–5 PM

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108 Leyton Ave

For two decades, Kelly Mark has been making art inspired by a keen interest in everyday routines and rituals. Her multidisciplinary work incorporates numerous such routines: from punching a clock when working in the studio, to compiling lists of uncommon phrases for text-based works, and appropriating film and television content in her videos. Mark makes art in response to her immediate environment. *108 Leyton Ave* is one of her most uncompromising works, a precisely staged performance in which the artist literally talks to herself while playing solitaire.

KM: Everything could have been different between us.

KM: Nothing could be further from the truth.

Filmed over several months, and staged using familiar items from the artist's apartment-studio, the high definition video is titled after the Scarborough address of a house the artist owned for several years. The video frames a specific place and time in the artist's life after she gave up her much-loved downtown studio and moved east of the Don Valley Parkway. After moving in to this modest suburban house, the artist began to feel disconnected, isolated from her peers and the downtown art scene she had long been a part of. So she retreated into herself as a coping mechanism.

KM: You think you know everything don't you?

KM: No. Only that I'm nothing without you.

The script is a bifurcated monologue, a call-and-response between artist and self. Mimicking a dissociative break or split personality, the artist turns the absurdity of the situation to her advantage. Mark's writing precisely reflects her interests and observations. Each sentence is constructed around the recurring use of the words

everything and nothing—a motif that can be found in several text-based works by the artist. An affirmation followed by a negation that operates like a circuit continuously opening and closing.

KM: Look, don't worry. Everything will be all right.

KM: But nothing will be as it was.

The result is like watching an existential Ping-Pong match. The volley between the mirrored versions of the artist as she drinks, smokes and argues with herself is alternately tense, funny, exasperating and surprisingly tender. The surrogates remind us of an old couple that doesn't appear to get along but can't bear to live apart. Ultimately, *108 Leyton Ave* is a clever and unblinking portrait of an artist's internal struggle.

— Ivan Jurakic

List of Work

108 Leyton Ave, 2014
Single-channel split screen video w/ sound,
10 minutes 13 seconds.

*Trying to Remember, Sometimes Wishing
I Could Forget*, 1996/2015
Single-channel split screen video, 33 minutes

The artist would like to acknowledge the Canada Council for the Arts for their generous financial assistance.

Image: Kelly Mark, *108 Leyton Ave* (Video Still), 2014.
Image courtesy of the artist and Diaz Contemporary.

Artist Biography

Kelly Mark has exhibited widely across Canada and internationally. Her work is represented in the public collections of The National Gallery of Canada, The Canada Council Art Bank, Canadian Foreign Affairs, The Art Gallery of Ontario, Musee d'Art Contemporain and many other public, corporate and private collections. She is the recipient of numerous grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council and Toronto Arts Council as well as the KM Hunter Artist Award, and Chalmers Art Fellowship. She lives and works in Toronto. Kelly Mark is represented by Diaz Contemporary, Toronto.
www.kellymark.com

September 17–October 31, 2015

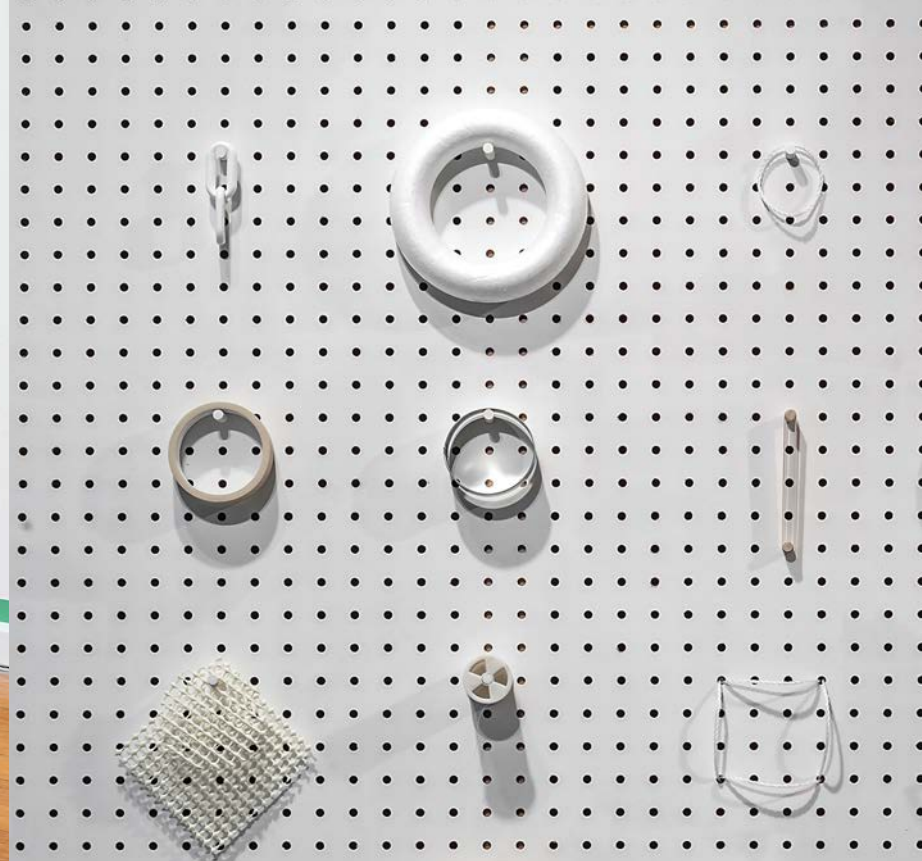
Roula Partheniou

Inventory

Kelly Mark

108 Leyton Ave





Inventory

In neurological terms, we take in a lot more information than our visual cortex can process. In fact, it processes only a fraction of the data we observe on a daily basis so there is a gap between what we see and what we perceive. Researchers refer to this as an *acuity-related* or *attention-related bottleneck*.¹ Our brains are constantly *bottlenecking* or limiting the processing of visual input. If we are being mindful or paying attention to details our visual cortex responds by freeing up more bandwidth to process this data. Otherwise, moment-to-moment, our perceptual apparatus glosses over a lot of peripheral information.

Roula Partheniou's practice is predicated on a comparable reduction of visual data. Collecting components from several bodies of work including: *Never Odd or Even* (2010), *Parts and Wholes* (2013), *Odd One Out* (2015), and *House & Home & Garden* (2015), *Inventory* sets out to reexamine the artist's growing lexicon of household goods, office, and building supplies. Constructed out of common materials, each form is reproduced in 1:1 scale and completed by the artist's skillful use of colour. Whether displayed individually or grouped in clusters, her works challenge us to consider how familiarity can also be deceptive.

Partheniou's process relies on a degree of perceptual mimicry. Whether duplicating a thermos, sponge or paper towel roll, the shape, volume and colour has been closely matched to suggest a reasonable facsimile. The artist provides just enough visual detail to make each item convincing without resorting to slavish reproduction. The objects are then stacked, mounted, or placed on shelves and tabletops. Although in fact carefully arranged, their seemingly casual positioning reiterates the notion that we are taking stock of a random assortment of goods and products in the process of being organized, unpacked or discarded.

Upon entering the gallery we encounter a sprawling constellation of objects arranged amidst what appear to be cardboard boxes scattered across the floor. Replicated rolls of masking tape, vintage board games, tennis balls, kitchenware, erasers, computer floppy discs, and VHS tapes have been constructed using little more than wood, medium density fibreboard (MDF), soft polymer clay, and acrylic house paint. The boxes themselves are carefully constructed MDF plinths staged to suggest moving boxes.

Towards the back of this arrangement, several objects have been organized in front of what appears to be a pane of glass: a book, a Rubik's cube, glue stick, roll of painters tape, and pair of paperclips. Walking around reveals a separate but identical group of objects reflected in what is actually a double-sided mirror. To further complicate our interpretation, one side is full-colour while the other has been reproduced in grey-scale. A surprising and disorienting optical effect takes place, as the colour seems to drain from the objects when looking from one side of the mirror to the other.

Made up of dozens of individual components mapped out across the back wall of the gallery, *Parts and Wholes* is a large constellation of modest sculptural elements that contrast the artist's more typical 1:1 scale replicas with a series of white minimalist forms that suggest building blocks. Sections and corners of each have been strategically painted a deep matte black to create simple yet effective optical illusions that evoke absences, cuts, and apertures in otherwise flat surfaces.

Masking tape is a subject the artist returns to repeatedly. Numerous rolls in varying thicknesses and colours can be found arranged throughout the gallery. There is even a strip of green painter's tape applied alongside a set of double doors leading to gallery storage. In actuality this is just a meticulously applied strip of acrylic paint.

The effectiveness of the deception is remarkable. A similar effect is used to mimic an 8 ½ x 11 inch sheet of paper on a clipboard. In this case, the clipboard is real.

These subtle discrepancies occur throughout the installation. The artist provides us with just enough information to confuse our perceptual apparatus. Two lengths of lumber lean against the wall. The lumber itself is a diversion. It is a delivery system for a painterly intervention, a subtle green and pink glow hovering just above the end grain of the wood. Confounding our ability to readily distinguish between artifact and artifice, Partheniou's continual disruption of our expectations is a playful form of subterfuge that tests our perceptual acuity and ability to differentiate fine details.

In effect, Partheniou's work *pre-bottlenecks* our perceptions. Hellmann's Mayonnaise. Kraft Peanut Butter. Billy Bee Honey. We can readily identify each by its form and colour, despite the fact that there are no logos or other distinguishing features provided to guide us. Each facsimile tricks our brain into assigning a remembered value based solely on the familiarity of the shape, pattern or arrangement of colours. Sooner or later we clue in to the discrepancy. After repeated double takes we can start to appreciate how deeply we have been conditioned to recognize familiar patterns and how effortlessly our perceptual apparatus can be derailed. A realization that is at once fascinating and disconcerting.

— Ivan Jurakic

1. D. C. Van Essen, B. Olshausen, C. H. Anderson, and J. L. Gallant, *Pattern recognition, attention, and information bottlenecks in the primate visual system*, Biology Division, Caltech, Pasadena, California, and Jet Propulsion Lab, Pasadena, California. Published in SPIE, vol. 1473, *Visual Information Processing: From Neurons to Chips*, 1991, p. 17–28.

List of Works

Excerpt from *House & Home & Garden*, 2015
Black Soda; *Coffee Cup*; *Fluorescent Tubes*;
Leaning Lumber; *Leaning Foam (Blue)*;
Packed Boxes (Mirror, Dishes); *Packed Boxes with Clutter*; *Paint Supplies*; *Storage Shelf*; *Driver Wood*, medium density fibreboard, acrylic paint, variable dimensions

Parts and Wholes, 2013
 Wood, medium density fibreboard, acrylic paint, gouache, variable dimensions

Pegboard Constellation, 2013
 Wood, medium density fibreboard, acrylic paint, variable dimensions

Proposal for Monument #1–6, 2013
 Wood, medium density fibreboard, eavestrough elbow, photocopy, acrylic paint, gouache, variable dimensions

Excerpt from *Five O'Clock Shadow*, 2012 and *Doppelkopf*, 2013,
 On desk: *Spindles*; *Stickies Stack*; *Clipboard*; *Highlighters*; *Envelope*; *Tape (Masking)*; *Glue Stick*
 On floor: *Boxes*; *ABC Books*; *Rubik's Cubes*; *Tape (Painter's)*; *Glue Sticks*; *Paperclips*
 Double-sided mirror, wood, medium density fibreboard, acrylic paint, variable dimensions

Excerpt from *Never Odd or Even*, 2010
Ascending Rolls; *Crate*; *Gift*; *Tape Stack*; *Beachball*; *Boxes*; *Tennis Ball with Cheesie Wedge*
 Wood, medium density fibreboard, polymer clay, flocking on foam, acrylic paint, variable dimensions

Other works, 2007–2015
Tape Stack (VHS); *Eraser Set*; *Tape Stack (Electrical Tape)*; *Tape Stack (Painter's, Masking, Electrical)*; *Tape (White, Electrical, Masking)*; *Brush with Chalk*; *Thermos*; *Circular Logic*
 Wood, medium density fibreboard, canvas, acrylic paint, variable dimensions

Images (cover): *Storage Shelf* (detail), 2015. Interior (left to right): *Paint Supplies* (detail), 2015; *Pegboard Constellation* (detail), 2013; *Tape Stack (VHS)*, 2013, Collection of Matthew Varey; *Milk Crate*, 2010. All artworks courtesy of the artist and MKG127 unless otherwise noted.

Works on Loan

Parts and Wholes, Collection of Munich Reinsurance Company Canada Branch (Life)

Gift, Collection of Micah Lexier

Proposal for Monument #3 (Partial Cube), Collection of Micah Lexier

Proposal for Monument #6 (Open Book, Blue), Collection of Joy Walker and Howard Podeswa

Tape Stack (VHS), Collection of Matthew Varey

Artist Biography

Roula Partheniou has exhibited across Canada and internationally. Her work is held in numerous private collections and in the corporate and institutional collections of the Bank of Montreal, TD Bank, MunichRe, the Royal Bank of Canada, University of Toronto, and the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives. She is a co-founder of Nothing Else Press and lives in Toronto. Roula Partheniou is represented by MKG127, Toronto.

www.roulapartheniou.com

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