

Object Lessons

Michelle Bui, Lizzy De Vita,
Lucia Hierro, Ella Dawn McGeough
& Sreshta Rit Premnath

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Curated by Jacqueline Mabey

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ELLA DAWN MCGEOUGH is an artist interested in relays. Her practice involves making, writing, organizing, and teaching. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, a Master of Fine Arts from The University of Guelph, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at York University, Toronto. Recently, her work has been presented at Goodwater Gallery, Toronto; 2nd Kamias Triennial, Quezon City; Suzanne Lemberg Usdan Gallery, Bennington College, among others. McGeough has participated in residencies at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity; Flaggfabrikken, Bergen; and Trelex, Puerto Maldonado. Since 2014, she has facilitated Art+Feminism Wikipedia edit-a-thons at numerous venues. Her writing has been published by Arsenal Toronto, Public Journal, Moire, C Magazine, ESP, Open Studios, and Susan Hobbs. She is from the unceded territory of Vancouver, Canada and lives in Toronto, Canada.

SRESHTA RIT PREMNATH is a multidisciplinary artist and the founder and co-editor of the publication *Shifter*. He has had solo exhibitions at Gallery SKE, Bangalore; Art Statements, Art Basel; Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin; Ace Gallery, Los Angeles; Kansas Gallery, New York; Nomas Foundation, Rome; The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis; and has an upcoming solo exhibition at the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions at venues including Queens Museum; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; 1A Space, Hong Kong; and Gallery Isabelle Van Den Eynde, Dubai. He completed his Bachelor of Fine Art at The Cleveland Institute of Art, his Master of Fine Arts at Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson and has attended the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and Smack Mellon, Brooklyn. Premnath is the Director of the undergraduate Fine Arts program at Parsons, New York.

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When we talk about an object of desire, we are really talking about
a cluster of promises we want someone or something
to make to us and make possible for us.
Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*

I remember it so clearly: eight years old, standing in a new friend's bedroom for the first time, picking up her knickknacks one by one, turning them around in my hands. Wanting, I suppose, to understand what they meant and what they said about her. I remember, too, the scolding that followed once my parents recognized my odd habit. *Touching*, they explained, is very different from *looking*. They forbade such tactile investigations which, of course, only made me want to do it more. We all want what is out of reach.

The artworks gathered together in *Object Lessons* speak to our desire for things, the meanings we invest into them, and how they mediate our relationship with the world. Michelle Bui's *Happy Like Doris Day*, 2017 features a startling arrangement of flowers and tripe, photographed according to the enticing formal conventions of commercial "packshot" photography, creating simultaneous feelings of desire and disgust. Lucia Hierro's oversize soft sculpture, *Black Bag Up A Six Floor Walk Up*, 2018 represents familiar consumer items, like Vicks VapoRub, Goya beans, and Presidente beer, on a large scale to point to the complex relationship between the intimacy of home, as represented by the items we use to feed and care for ourselves, and larger economic order. *A memorial for the present is the future of the past*, 2013 by Ella Dawn McGeough considers the objectification of women through a series of references to art history and mythology: Antonio Canova's *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, 1804-06, Félix González-Torres's candy piles, Ovid's recounting of Medusa's severed head turning seaweed into coral on the shore of the Red Sea. The materials used in the construction of luxury condo towers are employed in the creation of Sreshta Rit Premnath's *Slump*, 2016, suggesting the toll of hard labor and toxic materials on the precarious workers, and the contrast between their relative invisibility and the highly visible condo towers they build to house urban elites.

Lizzy De Vita's *Slang*, 2017 was created during an improvised dance, comprised of verbal, physical, and material conversation between two lovers, responding in turn to De Vita's repeated interventions, as she created temporary prosthetics to accommodate the dancer's tenuous positions.

MICHELLE BUI holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Concordia University, Montréal and a Master of Fine Arts from Université du Québec à Montréal. Her work has been shown in several group exhibitions including *Projet Pangée*, Montréal; *Vu Photo Ville de Québec*; *Galerie Antoine Ertaskiran*, Montréal; *Galerie Nicolas Robert*, Montréal. She has had solo exhibitions at *Galerie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal* and *Parisian Laundry*, Montréal. Upcoming projects include a solo exhibition at *Circa*, Montréal and a group show at *Maison de la culture Claude-Léveillée*, Montréal.

LIZZY DE VITA is an artist, writer and discussion curator who lives and works in Brooklyn. De Vita's work occupies a constellation of media, including performance, text, sound, drawing, installation, video and sculpture. Diverse in form, the work is unified by an underlying interest in viral moments: places where the boundaries between ourselves and others are blurred. De Vita earned her Bachelor of Arts in Art History and English Literature from Barnard College, New York and her Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture and Extended media at Yale University, New Haven.

LUCIA HIERRO is a Dominican American conceptual artist born and raised in New York City. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from SUNY Purchase and a Master of Fine Arts from Yale University, New Haven. She has exhibited in group shows at *Tiger Strikes Asteroid*, Brooklyn; *Bronx Museum of the Arts*; and *Paris Photo*, amongst others. Hierro has had solo shows in New York at *Elizabeth Dee Gallery* in Harlem and in the Dominican Republic at *Casa Quien Gallery*. She has participated in artist residencies including *Artist in the Market*, *Bronx Museum*; *Red Bull Arts*, *Detroit*; *Fountainhead Residency*, *Miami*; *Yaddo*, *Saratoga Springs*. She lives and works in the Bronx.