



Lewis Doherty

Keeps

Galerie pompom, Sydney

30 May - 24 June 2018

Keeps consists of both wall and floor-based sculptural vignettes and includes a diverse array of materials, each work pulling as much from the detritus of contemporary life and pop culture as from more accepted art making processes. What results is a contemporary collage of signifiers and actions that, sitting atop plinths and jutting out from steel supports, seeks a kind of architectural and conceptual harmony.

Each work maintains an ordered relationship to the space surrounding it, operating within clearly defined boundaries of display and form. Compositionally the works draw vitality from the nature of their playful and varied constituents: disparate forms and objects thrown together in a kind of fraught formal and aesthetic marriage that echoes our own uneasy relationships to images, objects and ourselves.

Beyond the order and geometrical resoluteness, there is a strong sense of frailty in each assemblage, with most owing more to chance and inevitability than careful planning. This feeling is confirmed when considering the titles of each work which open up a larger series of narrative possibilities and nervous social dialogues that prevent the work from slipping into pure formalist studies or cases of geometric abstraction.

Aesthetically the work exists in the intersection between the polished and the raw, possessing both the industrial sheen of the ready-made as well as a visceral materiality. There is a subtle nod to utility amongst a playful use of form, material and colour in works that for all their pop references and laser cut edges still find strong foundation in Arte-Povera and modernist assemblages.

As referenced in the title there is an obvious nod to the blockish formal qualities of bricks, towers and walls but it is the idea of the keep as an inner-sanctum and an image of last resort that underpins the conceptual value of each work and its allegorical nature. Owing to this, each work resembles an inner dialogue and a place or emotional state imperilled by outside forces.

Borrowing forms, concepts and materials from new media and digital culture and then channeling them through his own unique cosmology, Lewis Doherty creates enigmatic and often humorous modern allegories that make monuments out of that which is considered banal or superficial. Working across a wide variety of media, including sculpture, video, installation and illustration Lewis explores the tensions between the personal and the public, the illegitimate and the legitimate, the digital and the actual. Lewis has exhibited Australia wide, including at Perth's Institute of Contemporary Art, Melbourne's Nicholas Projects, Hobart's Constance ARI, Firstdraft and Carriageworks in Sydney and twice at Underbelly Arts Festival on Cockatoo Island. Lewis lives and works in Sydney.