The Domestic Plane: New Perspectives on Tabletop Objects

May 20, 2018 to January 13, 2019

Exhibition Overview

The Domestic Plane: New Perspectives on Tabletop Art Objects, is a series of exhibitions, organized by five curators featuring the work of over 70 artists, that challenges the nature of tabletop objects and explores the relationship between small works, the domestic sphere, and the human body or mind.

Throughout the course of history, humans have created particular relationships with objects. We are taught from a young age what things are considered more valuable or precious (as a result of their size, age, craftsmanship, and sentimental value) and how these things should be handled and maintained. The ways in which we display objects in the home specifically – on a desk, as a centerpiece, on a shelf or book case – in many ways help to define and broadcast its importance or value.

The objects themselves, as well as the location of their display, vary across decades, cultures, and communities. These differences can illuminate areas of shared experience across cultures, as well as moments of uniqueness and individuality.

Notions of traditional display are challenged throughout the exhibitions on view, with displays that are interactive, imperfect, and at times, propose risks to the objects themselves.

Also explored in these exhibitions are the relationships between humans and our things.

The works on view may direct the viewer to see the way which we make objects in our own image and give them human-like names, like legs of a table, neck of a bottle, or back of a chair. These works further generate questions about the relative scale of an object against the human body, as well as the question of why we find objects that fit in our hands more meaningful, useful, or accessible because of their small size and intimate nature.

The Domestic Plane presents us with an opportunity to touch, walk on top of, and open up several works of art.

The question of how, where, and why we organize and display particular, often significant, objects is at the heart of all of the works in The Domestic Plane. The experience of viewing these objects is akin to studying the set design of a theatre; all of the components are deliberately arranged to relate to each other and interact with the audience and galleries at large, forging fascinating relationships to be explored and new meanings to be discovered.
Objects Like Us
May 20, 2018 to January 13, 2019

About the Exhibition

Featuring works created by more than fifty artists over a sixty-year period, the works of art in Objects Like Us investigates both the qualities that humans share or give to the objects we invent, use, and hold on to. These objects share human qualities or functions that encourage the viewer to relate these objects to their own body and the objects we use, collect, or revere. This idea reveals itself in a number of ways every day, for example in the way we see faces in the back of cars, or when we use certain language to describe things, like the face of a clock, the lip of a window, or the tooth of a saw.

Objects Like Us features a floor installation created by David Adamo. Comprised entirely of white chalk arranged in a herringbone pattern to mimic antique parquet, viewers are invited to interact with and walk upon this floor. Over time the chalk will slowly crumble and crack. Our movements will be traced in the deterioration of the floor, as well as in the faint footprints we will leave as we walk through the Museum after exiting this gallery.

Themes

Passage of time; function vs. design; anthropomorphism vs. personification; animate vs. inanimate objects; object evolution and replacement

Curriculum Connections

Visual Arts:
NA-VA.K-12.5 Reflecting Upon and Assessing the Characteristics and Merits of Their Work and the Work of Others
NA-VA.9-12.3 Choosing and Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, and Ideas
NA-VA.K-12.6 Making Connections Between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines

Language Arts and Social Studies:
NL-ENG.K-12.2 Understanding the Human Experience
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and Evaluate Content Presented in Diverse Media and Formats, Including Visually and Quantitatively, as well as in Words

Science and Mathematics:
NS.K-12.3 Life Science
NS.9-12.5 Science and Technology
NS.9-12.6 Science in Personal and Social Perspectives
About the Exhibition

In this full gallery installation, viewers find themselves at the center of a scene that feels both familiar and unfamiliar. A large, fabric form surrounds a desk, and invites visitors to come and take a seat. There is a large sink, a refrigerator-like form, and a functional yet fantastical fan. Viewers are challenged to make sense of these objects in relation to the title of the installation and the artworks themselves.

*Kitchen Arrangement* further encourages each viewer to question what lies beneath the flashy veneers and exteriors of our possessions, and to consider furniture as functional sculpture. The tension between function and design in this work pushes us to investigate not only why we surround ourselves with particular objects, but how these objects are made, what they’re made of, and where moments of innovation or experimentation can exist without sacrificing their function.

Additionally, this exhibition calls into question the idea of the kitchen as a key domestic site, whose meaning and importance shifts culturally, periodically, and geographically. The unique qualities we observe in different styles of kitchens, furniture designs, and appliances, can illuminate the ways in which there are both universal conventions shared across the globe, and areas of variance and individuality particular to one’s location, culture, or heritage.

Themes

Function vs. form; furniture design; construction and fabrication; home as insight to culture; cultural comparisons

Curriculum Connections

**Visual Arts:**
NA-VA.9-12.3 Choosing and Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, and Ideas
NA-VA.K-12.6 Making Connections Between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines

**Language Arts and Social Studies:**
NL-ENG.K-12.2 Understanding the Human Experience
VA:Cn11.1.6a Analyze how Art Reflects Changing Times, Traditions, Resources, and Culture

**Science and Mathematics:**
NS.9-12.5 Science and Technology
NS.9-12.6 Science in Personal and Social Perspectives
About the Exhibition

*On Edge* presents the work of seven artists confronting the nature of the edge as it relates to conventions of display within an interior domestic space and as a site of tension and potentiality. Centered around the work of Anthony Caro, the gallery will feature a number of pieces of modern furniture (including a desk, coffee table, and bookcase) as the pedestals for the sculptures. The work is precariously placed and perched so that it engages with the surfaces’ edges.

Exploring the way the presentation of an objects transforms its value, meaning, or message, this exhibition challenges the idea of how objects are kept, maintained, protected, or displayed. An object on a high, visible shelf in one’s home is both celebrated and at risk, always on view but also at risk of falling. This tension, where safety and danger coexist, is central to these artists’ work.

Feelings of excitement and anxiety are evoked as viewers make their way through the exhibition, hyper-aware of the objects on display because of their precarious placement, dancing on the edge.

Themes

Balance/gravity; suspense in writing; kinetic and potential energy; curator and arrangement; edge as border; object design and function

Curriculum Connections

**Language Arts and Social Studies:**
- **NL-ENG.K-12.5** Communication Strategies and Descriptive Language
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2** Determine the Central Ideas or Information of a Primary or Secondary Source; Provide an Accurate Summary of the Source Distinct from Prior Knowledge or Opinions

**Science and Mathematics:**
- **CCSS.Math.Practice.MP1** Make Sense of Problems and Persevere in Solving Them
- **CCSS.Math.Practice.MP6** Attend to Precision.
- **K.Ps.1** Objects and Materials can be Sorted and Described by their Physical Properties
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.4** Determine the Meaning of Symbols, Key Terms, and Other Domain-Specific Words and Phrases as They Are Used in a Specific Scientific Context
- **RI 3.3** Describe the Relationship Between a Series of Historical Events, Scientific Ideas or Concepts, or Steps in Technical Procedures Using Language that Pertains to Time, Sequence, and Cause/Effect
Handheld
May 20, 2018 to January 13, 2019

About the Exhibition
Exploring the relationship between objects and the human body, Handheld features small-scale works spanning conventions of both art and craft. The objects on view are scaled to the hand, presenting a variety of materials, textures, and weights. These objects cannot be touched, challenging the viewer to imagine or infer their tactile and physical realities. Miniature or small objects are often perceived as precious, delicate, and intriguing, generating a feeling that these works hold a particular value.

In today’s society, the most frequently used handheld objects are smart phones and tablets. This shift towards experiencing the world digitally has redefined how we interact with the world. Touch is now an agent of function or a way to complete tasks rather than means of creation, exploration, or sensory engagement. A swipe or physical interaction between our hands and our digital devices are based on coding, rather than the sensation of touch.

This exhibition inspires us to consider what is lost in translation when something is viewed but cannot be touched. The objects on view are meant to be held, examined, and experienced, but the viewer is denied this opportunity. In addition, these objects are all containers of some sort, their treasures also withheld from view. The viewer is subsequently forced to imagine the overall feel, texture, and material of these objects, as well as what mysteries they hold.

Themes
Scale; sensory experiences; real v reproduction; instant gratification and access; small as precious; material and construction; hand as tool; texture

Curriculum Connections
Visual Arts:
VA:Cr1.1.1a Engage Collaboratively in Exploration and Imaginative Play with Materials
NA-VA.K-12.6 Making Connections Between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines
NA-VA.K-12.5 Reflecting Upon and Assessing the Characteristics and Merits of Their Work and the Work of Others

Language Arts and Social Studies:
NL-ENG.K-12.2 Understanding the Human Experience
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and Evaluate Content Presented in Diverse Media and Formats, Including Visually and Quantitatively, as well as in Words

Science and Mathematics:
NS.K-12.3 Life Science
K.Ps.1 Objects and Materials Can Be Sorted and Described by Their Physical Properties
NS.9-12.6 Science in Personal and Social Perspectives
MP.2.ESS1-2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively
Almost Everything On The Table:
The Smallish Explanatory Sculptures of Tucker Nichols as Employed in the Pursuit of Understanding by Dakin Hart
May 20, 2018 to January 13, 2019

About the Exhibition

Even before the digital era, more or less everything you needed to understand about the universe fit on a kitchen table.

The exhibition, designed like a movie set meets laboratory, is designed to be explored, experimented with, and experienced. Viewers are invited to discover new tools, found objects and apparatuses in order to understand larger concepts. Featuring kaleidoscopes, telescopes, crystal balls, and journals, the space inspires a feeling of wonder and excitement for considering the world’s biggest questions, while demonstrating them on the smallest scales. Tucker Nichols’ work reflects on early scientific discoveries made with everyday and ordinary objects, highlighting how experimentation with household items can yield enlightening scientific discoveries.

Hart and Nichols demonstrate the joy and novelty of discovery and understanding, reinvigorating the desire to comprehend through hands-on exploration, trial and failure, and ingenuity.

Themes

Scientific process; experimentation and exploration; participation and interaction; history of invention; documentation of process; pseudo-science; low-fi/low-tech;

Curriculum Connections

Visual Arts:
NA-VA.K-12.5 Reflecting Upon and Assessing the Characteristics and Merits of the Work of Others
NA-VA.9-12.3 Choosing and Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, and Ideas
Language Arts and Social Studies
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.4 Determine the Meaning of Symbols, Key Terms, and Other Domain-Specific Words and Phrases as They Are Used in a Specific Scientific Context

Science and Mathematics:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.7 Integrate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text with a version of that information expressed visually
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.8 Distinguish Among Facts, Reasoned Judgment Based on Research Findings, and Speculation in a Text
NS.9-12.6 Science in Personal and Social Perspectives
HS-ESS3-4 Evaluate or Refine a Technological Solution to a Problem Impacting Human Activities and Natural Systems
MP.2.ESS1-2 Reason Abstractly and Quantitatively
Analia Segal: contra la pared
May 20, 2018 to September 3, 2019

About the Exhibition

Drawing upon her childhood in Argentina and adulthood in New York City, Analia Segal’s exhibition challenges the domestic space as safe and comfortable while questioning the functional nature of everyday objects. Including sculpture and video, the works on view break the boundaries of art and design. Videos play in window frames as a barrage of spoken words in both English and Spanish bounce from wall to wall. A carpet near the entrance of the gallery unravels and stretches at it’s center, reaching up to the ceiling above, and stools take on rippling, human-like forms, generating questions of touch, sensation, and what lies beneath.

Segal’s disruption of familiar objects evoke both wonder and discomfort, causing the viewer to explore their own feelings in relation to Segal’s work.

The title contra la pared, meaning both “against the wall” and “cornered” in Spanish, delves into her experience and understanding of walls as marking borders as well as pathways, comparing the large stone walls of Buenos Aires to the fluid, ever-changing, and unrestricted walls New York City apartment buildings. The use of both English and Spanish throughout the exhibition further explores the idea of boundaries, bringing language barriers to light.

Themes

Borders and boundaries; design and function; geometry and pattern; natural vs. man-made; new media; animate vs. inanimate; cultural experience; form vs. function; freedom vs. confinement

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts and Social Studies:
NL-ENG.K-12.2 Understanding the Human Experience
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.4 Determine the Meaning of Symbols, Key Terms, and Other Domain-Specific Words and Phrases as They Are Used in a Specific Scientific Context
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.4.4.C Use Context to Confirm or Self-Correct Word Recognition and Understanding, Rereading or Returning to the Work or Text as Necessary

Science and Mathematics:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.9 Compare and Contrast the Information Gained From Experiments, Simulations, Video, or Multimedia Sources with that Gained From Reading a Text on the Same Topic
NS.9-12.5 Science and Technology
NS.9-12.6 Science in Personal and Social Perspectives
School Programs:

ArtWrite (Grades 1 to 12)

Students are invited to investigate the works of art on view as a platform for critical thinking and creative engagement, exploring the Museum’s exhibitions as inspiration for writing and design-based activities in the galleries.

STEAM Tours (Grades 1 to 12)

STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Art (+Design), and Math] promotes and positions art and design as equally critical in teaching twenty-first-century skills, interwoven with, not separated from, technical fields or subjects.

School in Residence (Grades 3 to 12)

School in Residence offers an opportunity for educators and students to make The Aldrich their classroom for a day or more. Classes across disciplines can use the art on view to gain new perspectives on their curriculum, with the galleries as a backdrop. The Aldrich’s Museum Educators will work with teachers prior to the visit to create lessons that use contemporary art as a vehicle to teach multiple disciplines.

For students in Pre-K and Kindergarten, please visit www.aldrich.org/programs/art-onsite for information about Art Onsite, the museum’s Early Education program.