

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Roy McMakin: Two Bowls, a Cabinet Door, Two Tables, and a Window (with a Blue Wall)

September 7 – November 9, 2019

Opening reception: Saturday, September 7, 6–8pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *Two Bowls, a Cabinet Door, Two Tables, and a Window (with a Blue Wall)*, an exhibition of sculpture by Roy McMakin—the artist's sixth presentation at the gallery.

Although Roy McMakin makes both houses and furniture, he thinks of himself—first and foremost—as a conceptual artist who makes sculpture. His work explores ideas of home, memory, domesticity, love, loss, and how language influences our understanding of these concepts. “When you call a thing a *table* or a *sculpture*, the word you use changes the thing,” he says. The sculptures in this show look like tables, doors, windows, and bowls.

As with all of his work for the past two decades, McMakin designed these sculptures to be fabricated by the master craftsmen at his shop in Seattle, Big Leaf Manufacturing. His favored media is brush-painted wood—exactly crafted, chunky, minimal forms (with special attention to color) often descended from the Shaker aesthetic. Details are notoriously subtle, mischievous, and sometimes hysterical (as with previous works including a bed painted in three slightly different shades of blue, a chest of drawers with no knobs, or a nightstand comprised of two interlocked (i.e., sixty-nining) chairs on their sides).

Each object here has a twin (with one exception), making its front and back (or top/underside) visible from a single vantage point. The two double-hung windows installed side-by-side (on a gallery wall) actually represent the same window, as it would be viewed from both inside and outside a building. A small table straddles its inverted doppelgänger—top on the ground, legs in the air. We look into a painted wooden replica of a ceramic soup bowl—and at the same time, underneath it—used nearly every day by Frank Peck, a woodworker who has been with Big Leaf for more than 20 years. McMakin gives the same care and attention to a second bowl, too—reproducing a vessel that belonged to the grandmother of Barbara Marino, another long-tenured member of the Big Leaf family. And although one work is not exactly a set of twins, it still comprises a pair. Its title is characteristically deadpan: *A Lamp Table and Picture Frame Each with Thirty Coats of Red Paint That Are Not to Be in the Same Room with Each Other*, 2012.

McMakin conceived of the pairs as a formal exercise—a way of looking at an object from two different perspectives. But given his interest in language (and considering how many of McMakin's previous works explore coupledness), one might conclude the connotations of the words *pair* and *twin* provide an invitation for anthropomorphization. What kinds of personalities do these objects have? Could the cabinet doors be siblings? Long-time lovers? Or just one person, depicted in multiple as if by a Cubist?

Ruminating about their own work in the article “Reading Things,” artist/writer Gordon Hall elucidates some of why McMakin is interested in looking so closely at the domestic objects that live in our homes:

I propose a way of reading sculpture as a form of embodied pedagogy—sculptures as objects from which we learn. Instead of thinking about artworks symbolically, metaphorically, representationally, or autobiographically, I wonder about the possibilities for treating objects as teachers who might be able to assist us in developing different ways of understanding and experiencing our bodies. Sculptures as dance teachers? As gym coaches? As lovers?...

...This is largely a question of reworking our vision so that in the moments we encounter one another, we are actually able to see differently from the way we have been taught. This is a form of aesthetic labor—relearning how to see and identify what we are looking at—and it seems to me some of our best teachers might be things themselves.

Roy McMakin, born in 1956 in Wyoming, lives and works in San Diego. McMakin has mounted solo exhibitions at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum (Connecticut), Artpace (San Antonio), Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), Portland Art Museum, Seattle Art Museum, and Western Bridge (Seattle). He has participated in shows at the Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston), Museum of Arts and Design (New York), Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Tacoma Art Museum, and Vancouver Art Gallery. His work is in the collections of the Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), Henry Art Gallery (Seattle), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Museum of Modern Art (New York), Olympic Sculpture Park (Seattle), San Diego International Airport, San Diego Central Library, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Weatherspoon Art Museum (North Carolina).