

Kristina Kite Gallery

Amy O'Neill
Convex Cornea
June 3 – July 15, 2017

In Amy O'Neill's artworks and installations, the past and present collude to reframe American haunts and histories through a lens that is both personal and political. *Convex Cornea*, O'Neill's first exhibition in Los Angeles, includes new works and works from earlier projects reimagined in new contexts.

A series of wax transfer drawings borrows imagery from the artist's collection of her childhood 'Wish Books,' large catalogues that department stores once produced in anticipation of the holidays. Transposed through O'Neill's hand and eye, the festive advertisements take on a slightly warped sensibility, suggesting a darker undercurrent in childhood games and family fun.

A similar reframing is at work in two videos, *Zoo Revolution* and *The Well-Fed Wolf*. Using footage that O'Neill shot on 16mm film of an abandoned petting zoo and a neglected storybook forest near her hometown in western Pennsylvania, O'Neill captures the overgrown grounds and fading signage of snack menus and animal cages in the midst of a bleak winter landscape. Interspersed with footage from cartoons and educational films and set to a death metal soundtrack by Orphan, the video merges childhood fantasy, youthful angst, and stark adult reality. The rec room-like installation includes the 1977 TV console from her parent's home, bean bag chairs made by O'Neill, and vacuum form cage bars.

O'Neill's *Bean Bag Flats* use bean bag pattern forms as canvases for silk screened jelly beans and t-shirt iron ons that reflect popular tropes and trends of the 1970's. The flattened bags resemble human targets, in a sense becoming body bags, with their comic words and images taking on more sinister implications. Forms cut, vacuumed or emptied, leaving only their shells or seams, also appear in O'Neill's series of American flag drawings entitled *Deconstructing 13 Stripes and a Rectangle* and the *Ghost Tree Paravent*, a luminous vacuum form paravent made from forest tree branches and pine.

In O'Neill's words, "I'm not nostalgic for a past that I only remember tangentially. These works aim at questioning how childhood souvenirs bring us to our current Trumpian juggernaut of telling tales. Or, as the cognitive psychologist Ulric Neisser once said about memory: 'Out of a few stored bone chips we remember a dinosaur.'"

Amy O'Neill was born in Beaver, PA. She lives and works in New York and has had numerous solo exhibitions including Swiss Institute, NY; MAMCO, Geneva; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH; Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NY; Le Consortium, Dijon; and PS1/MOMA, Long Island City, NY. O'Neill also has several monographs and artist's books, including *Red Headed Stranger* (Karma, 2014), *Forests, Gardens & Joe's* (J & L Books/Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris, 2011), *The Old Woman's Shoe* (One Star Press, 2009) and *Amy O'Neill: Suburban Imagination* (JRP Ringier, 2008).

Kristina Kite Gallery is located at 3400 W. Washington Blvd. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11am to 5pm. For images and additional information, please contact info@kristinakitegallery.la.

in Los Angeles