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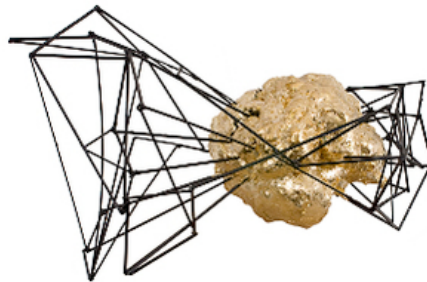


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High Intensity
by Petra Royale Bibeau

Modality Room
blankspace
6608 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland, CA 94608
March 21, 2009 - April 27, 2009



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Revising the solo installation show at Blankspace this season is San Francisco based artist Renée Gertler with Modality Room. Models, methods, and forms striped of all monikers present the footwork for intangible meditations on issues of universality, reasons of existence, otherwise known as, the wonders of astronomy. Gertler's installation and respectively individual crafted sculptures allow Modality Room to comprise a full-scale inquiry into the conditionality of existence.



In OMG Gertler recreates the visual chaos of contemplation on a low coffee table made of insulation foam. A mass of black matches, aluminum cans, apples, fingers, and a web draped off the table onto a foam core OMG lettering, which alludes to the left over's of youthful time spent speculating issues of infinite nature. In divergent fashion, Gertler chooses mostly distinguishable objects and platforms for delivery to deter from the otherwise heady deliberations of existence, including the familiar housings of living room furniture (coffee table, bookshelf) and macramé style hangers as seen in Untitled.



Gertler's choice of physical casings insist on a fascinating duality, which arises consistently in Modality Room: the mix of contemporary social and cultural treatments onto age-old inquiries of being. That said,

Gertler wrangles the issues of astronomy from a social aspect: the economy of humanity, the population of some spaces over others, the trained reactions to the unknown, the unwinding of guesses and limited resources to assist in guessing. In conjunction with the familiar, Gertler objectifies the obvious with symbols: apples (traditional education), books (objects of radical nature), matches and cans (pathways to unlocking mysteries through fire and intoxication).

Gertler's International Dark Sky takes a contemporary disputed issue of conservation and global warming, (another issue of speculation and inconclusion), and highlights the visual politics and beauty of such an issue using a database that maps the lights of the world at night. International Dark Sky allows the viewer to peer into paper bags with black interiors and mirrored bottoms projecting plotted light graphs of the earth's light usage. Africa is mostly left dark, as Europe, the Americas and Asia are virtually glowing.



Incredibly, Modality Room is not attempting a social statement as much as it's launching an open-ended inquiry. This is where Gertler's installation truly powers up: the visual appeal (flat black in mass, gold leaf, purples, mirrors and light) mixed with the quiet mediations of space and the unknown offer vast interpretations for the viewer.

--Petra Royale Bibeau

Images courtesy Blankspace and the artist

instability collapses, 2008, mixed media

OMG:Void, 2008, mixed media

cosmology in a paper bag, 2007, mixed media

Posted by [Petra Royale Bibeau](#) on 3/22

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