

Affirmation Dungeon

There's a lot going on when there isn't much there, that's something I've had to learn for myself, so I guess it's something that everyone has to work out for themselves, if they do. But you know that in a lot of circumstances, things don't form the meaning that they purport to. What I mean to say is that ideas move around in the structure of something, formed out of it. But to look at it, you wouldn't think they'd be there, even if the artist made the whole thing with those ideas in mind. The title has got a cave in it, which is something I'd forgotten until I began to write a description. The first word was cave, which seemed to relate to a feeling in my memory of one of the rooms. But then I thought about the problems of describing something that either you've already seen or will never see. It's like describing a dream - you really need to have a point, and not a dream. I thought about descriptions of shows that sound really good, those people seem to be able to remake the whole thing in prose. Another thing you can do is to try and remake the show as a text that doesn't seem to relate at all, that has a similar feeling or structure, somehow. But a cave. It's this feeling of entering a room and there's a room, which describes the feeling of another space. I'm always moving stuff around. I'll put something on top of something else and it just makes sense. Then I'll put it in another room, and it doesn't come out right this time. I ask someone else, and they say to put it on the wall and they're right. But in some other room, it turns into an interesting pile of things again, but this time with different objects. I guess there's a lot of chance there. But it might be more accurate to talk about finding. I'm always moving around without any sense of what I'm doing, but each move seems okay, and at some point there's something there. Most of the time it happens with stuff that's there by chance. Then if you leave it that way for a while, it's really good. Nothing's finished in the sense that we're still moving, and to return to something is to affect your perception of whatever you return to, perhaps changing it fundamentally. Nothing's ever finished. Inanimate objects are constantly changing if the way we see is constantly changing. And you're always moving around. I can't say anything. I'm just doing stuff, and sometimes it seems to ring true, but I might come back to what I wrote a few days later, and it's this curdled mess of words and feelings. It's just completely fallen apart. Most of the rooms seem to have three things: the rooms as sculptures of rooms, or the space of the drawing of a room; a small mess of the unfinished space; an artwork. There isn't much and there's nothing left out. Everything beyond the doorway is the space of the work. The small mess and the room might be in the same category, making an unfinished room. The artwork in the unfinished room could be an object to finish the unfinished space, turning a transitory space into something that you can grasp. In this reading, the work stands in relation to the room. And you, as the audience, have to negotiate with the room to get to the work. Or even that you negotiate the room without making contact with the work, which is there for the space itself and will have no dealings with you. But that's just one idea about it.

By Tahi Moore

For the exhibition by Dan Arps, *Affirmation Dungeon*, at Gambia Castle, July 2007.

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