

Michael Lorsung

Artist Statement

I am interested in objects that are human made, but not necessarily handmade. I relish the idea that as a species we have largely created the contemporary world that we live in and interact with on a daily basis. Our relationship to the objects that run through our lives is largely passive in so far as our thoughtfulness about their origins. Because of the ubiquitous nature of human made objects coupled with the throw-away, utilitarian culture we live in, we frequently dismiss or simply never recognize the beauty in these things.

My own introduction to art and object-making was through the lense of craft, has colored many of the assumptions and understandings that I have regarding the origin of objects and their associated value. Culturally we understand handmade objects to embody value that is directly related to their having been crafted by a discernible author, even if the exact identity of that author is opaque. Conversely, we classify industrially produced objects as a raw commodity, that is that they exist in classes of objects (“an iphone”, “a Toyota Camry”, etc.) rather than as an individually identifiable object. The objects are interchangeable, they lack individual identity in the way that a specific crafted object might not. As a result, we value these things mostly in relationship to their utility, and rarely spend time to understand their connection to humanity in a larger sense.

This has to do with the language of industry, its ability to faithfully reproduce designs in numbers and with such close tolerances that oftentimes the things that might make an object unique or identifiable are hidden beneath this veil. What is also hidden though, is the fact that these objects come from the minds and hands of human makers. Be these from the Chinese factory worker tediously assembling iPhone components by hands, or the process engineer who developed the workflow for the assembly of door panels on a Toyota Camry, these things are as human as the romanticized vision of a potter alone in her studio, though they certainly lack the luster and cultural cache of the latter.

My work seeks to explode these relationships, by using visual language from my craft background as well as from my experience as a consumer and worker in the industrialized world I strive to expose the commonality that all human produced objects share, regardless of origin, and in doing so to better understand a world that increasingly seems intent on obfuscating this connection.