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CART 360

September 20th, 2019



ETUDE ONE

STRANGER THINGS

When exploring the physical world, we find ourselves often returning to objects that remain constant over time, objects which recur in the cycle of years, months and days. I have found that it is the objects one least thinks about like a glass or a pair of glasses or even a lamp which when looked at carefully and critically can make us reflect deeply on the nature of interactions. How does it make me feel? What is the tactile nature of this object? Questioning myself in these ways I looked at everyday objects in my life and have tried to find the hidden magic deep within' the ordinary.

For the first object I chose a wooden chair I have at my cottage, it's smooth with sharp edges. It feels solid almost powerful in its solidity, like a permanent fixture. It's also neither cold nor warm a kind of otherworldly neutral. It is also as definite or as certain as the floors and walls that surround it. The wood gives it a familiar friendly feeling, the grain which is invisible to the touch is still present to the eye. It is a visually pleasing object, in its strict simple geometric principles. Sitting in it I can feel supported, after sometime without moving its rigidness can make parts of my body fall asleep. Solid objects like this give comfort, their unchanging nature is a constant in life, knowing whenever I will return it will be there and that constant is a comfort to a life filled with inconsistencies. It is also a subconscious, unremarkable feature of every home, cottage, office space, cafe etcetera, which gives it another comforting familiarity. It's form is composed squares stacked up & connected to other squares, bridged by rectangular pieces. Is it short or exactly the right height, I don't think about this when I sit in it but I know that I will sit at a height which is to me "normal". It has a minimalist build and is composed entirely of pure function. A chair is an invitation to sit, it provides rest from weary legs, it is always present at the table or in a room and forms part of the makeup of those. It supports me (quite literally) and serves as a reminder of all homes or places of rest I've ever been in. It fits in with many other objects as well as I've shown however it can also make a dissonance if it is missing from a space where it ought to be. The chair could be made into an electric object, examples already exist such as motorized chairs or the more gruesome electric chair, but a talking chair with speakers by its headboard and sensors below its seat would make for something more akin to a self-conscious object, an object which is as familiar with you as you are with it and knows this. To me the chair is like any ancient temple that still remains with us today, unchanged and foundationally solid. Truly a testament to logical and effective design even if it is unremarked upon for these qualities.



The silver glass, cool to the touch cold, delicate, smoother than smooth. For my second object I chose a mirror. It is sharply edged and hints at its own importance by its framing implying that what lies within is art. However it is immediately odd to the eye which is so used to the normal look of things that when it finds the mirror and sees the parallel world inside it, it can, poetically speaking, appear as if a seamless rift in reality has appeared before our sight. A mirror is as close to a magical artifact as we will find in this world. Its reflection draws you in as if casting you in a spell, a mirror can be the most other worldly item found in a home yet so common place that you wouldn't think twice when presented with one. I think I can accurately recall first seeing myself in a mirror, I was in my childhood home, my parents had a bedroom with large windows facing a large bed, to the right was the door to the hallway but to the left was a closet composed entirely of sliding mirror doors. I remember looking at a small figure in the reflection and thinking it was funny that he moved when I moved, this is a sweet memory. Although we often get caught up observing ourselves the mirror can be manipulated to create truly otherworldly sights, lining two mirrors up creates an infinite space, rows upon rows of parallel worlds. Its shape is long, rectangular, a window into the unreal or real. Why is the mirror meaningful? perhaps because it offers a new perspective on ourselves. We can see ourselves as an outsider would. It literally allows us to reflect on our appearance, sometimes it tells us more than just how we look but also how we feel. Sometimes it pleases, other times it upsets, it can motivate us and ruin us. It slips into the setting of any room, kitchen, bathroom, it attracts the eye and diverts it almost never seeing it truly but simply looking through it. It could be a smart mirror depicting stats behind its reflection or it could be made to darken when you want to look at yourself

subverting the anticipated result. It is an artifact which is designed to entirely toy with our classic understanding of perception and is pleasing to look at in its clean unbroken aesthetically simple beauty.

[INSERT PICTURES OF MIRROR HERE]

For the third object I chose my electric toothbrush. Slick, slimey, a weird warmth that only plastic objects can have. It is meant to fit in the hand while the bristles at the end are a semisoft, semi-prickly, accent to its plastic form. It makes me feel uncomfortable almost reminding me of some kind of unknown and feared scientific instrument. However nowadays it reminds me of health and positive habits. I have many conflicting emotions connected to the toothbrush, perhaps more than a healthy adult should have. Mainly I feel shame, sometimes even disgust at myself. Also intermingled in that is a sense of pride (as silly as that is), whenever I see it, I feel a sense of balance in me. Its form is slick, almost seamless, it's plastic switch clicks meaningfully. It's soft grip behind it feels definite and the grip makes it fit perfectly in the hand. Here's a little story about a young boy who had trouble with brushing his teeth, he was so inconsistent and so irregular that it took him having a root canal at the age of 22 to change his ways. Now I'm thankful for our modern dentistry and thankful in many ways for that root canal, because it redefined my relationship to the toothbrush. It is a small object which doesn't make itself very noticable. Its place in the composition of a full bathroom or a proper hygiene kit is integral. Where you find a toothbrush you will usually find other objects: floss, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, soap, a shower, tile floors. It is already conductive but it can be made into more, it could speak to you, maybe critique you for your dank breath or encourage you as you brush, or maybe it could be made to be an annoying object demanding attention until you use it. Without any knowledge of its purpose it looks like a repair tool, a prod or a pick. It's aesthetic qualities are clean, sterile almost alien-like, in a very unimpressive way it is almost something out of sci-fi. It is sturdy, reliable, plastic and crafty. It's mysterious inner mechanism closed off to the eye can invite a definite degree of imagination. The electric toothbrush is an objects that I resonate with for much of the same reason that in my youth I didn't resonate with it, it's a testament to routine, a monument to self-care.

[INSERT PICTURES OF TOOTHBRUSH HERE]

For my favorite of these objects my pick is clear, for it is the object which I have struggled to interact with the most. The toothbrush, or the electric toothbrush in this case. I think since the electric toothbrush cannot act on its own, it is a static system depending on the human driven goal of brush one's teeth to be used. I like the idea of giving it some kind of autonomy, a desire and fashion of expressing its desire. Like in

disney's classic animation "the sorcerer's apprentice" I wish to animate this object to life and set it on a one track desire to clean your mouth. In my first scenario I imagined an electric toothbrush which is desperate and annoyingly persistent about getting itself inside your mouth, being belligerent, repetitive in its demands, and a general nuisance. In the second scenario, I imagined that its mechanism could be related to its regular usage, the less it is used, the slower it becomes, the more its used the faster it spins.

In my last scenario and personal favorite imagined it like a cat which when neglected acts out, maybe if you forget to brush your teeth it could refuse to turn on, and "Hissss" when picked up the next morning. Putting the impetus on you to coax it into performing its function.