

Response to Caitlin Cherry

For this visiting artist lecture, Caitlin Cherry talked about her career from graduate school until the present. She explained her process, which involves creating dioramas out of paper, boxes, and clay. Then, she paints the dioramas from observation. Working this way makes the scenes in her paintings look like unstable, flimsy paper structures. I really appreciated this method of working because she has an actual reference and can paint from observation, but she has complete control over the creation of that reference as well. I already knew that artists often worked this way, but I think her process is unique in that the viewer is supposed to know that it is paper. So, just by looking at the painting, the viewer is given information about her process.

Another piece that stood out to me was one in which she painted over strips of painter's tape to create stripes of bare canvas. Then, she represented the missing color, which should have been in those blank stripes, on the floor with colorful bouncy balls. I thought this was a creative way to combine painting with sculpture, while calling attention to the technicality of color in painting.

Next, she talked about how she moved away from painting figures by inventing a character that purposely did not have any "historical weight". She started calling the figure "Gollum", and she painted it into several of her pieces. I thought this was a smart choice because it creates unity throughout her work and avoids unwanted associations that her viewers might make. Although, telling us that she calls it "Gollum" could create associations.

She described another interesting method of "sacrificing failed works", in which she uses "failed" paintings to create installations. For example, she spray painted the word loser on a painting and hung it next to a therapy chair. She explained that by "tagging" the painting, she was taking away the "preciousness" of it, or her attachment to it. The therapy chair was a joke that the painting needed therapy. Again, I thought this idea was interesting, and I think it is important to be able to work freely without getting too attached to the outcome. This was her way of finding a balance between overthinking her art and giving up complete control to the medium. I think in art it becomes a back

and forth process between your expectation of the work and what the work actually becomes. It was reassuring to see that other artists have this similar experience.

When she presented her most recent works, I was really impressed with her bold choices. She started to take her interest of combining painting, sculpture, and installation to its limits. She is not afraid to commit to large, complex projects, which are often related to war. A pair of paintings was set at war with each other with one blasting a cannon at the other. Another installation in a museum included catapults and crossbows that looked like they were about to launch paintings into other artwork or chandeliers. She uses chains, large amounts of resin, weapons, projections, and other medias. Her most recent work was a colorful, tiled pool of water. So, I really appreciate her fearlessness when it comes to combining medias, creating heavy, large-scale projects, and incorporating theatrical components into her work. I am using large found objects in my most recent project, and so her work really inspired me and reassured me that I do not need to stay confined to simply paint and canvas.