

Beautiful Obsolescence curated by Amanda McDonald Crowley

Jeanette May, Adrienne Wortzel, Mary Mattingly

March 2 - 30, 2018



The Cluster Gallery is pleased to present ***Beautiful Obsolescence***, a group exhibition featuring photographic works by Jeanette May and Adrienne Wortzel, as well as sculpture by Mary Mattingly, curated by Amanda McDonald Crowley. The exhibition will be on view from March 2 to March 30, 2018, with a public opening reception on March 2 from 7 to 9pm.

Our contemporary lives are filled with redundant technologies and consumer goods. To make sense of the technologies and objects that fill our lives, the artists in ***Beautiful Obsolescence*** reimagine consumer goods. By recontextualizing our view on these objects the artists bring a fresh eye to how these objects affect us, giving them new lives.

Jeanette May's ***Tech Vanitas*** photographs of precariously stacked gadgets address the anxiety surrounding technological obsolescence. As May observes, we live in an age filled with devices that make domestic life faster, smarter, easier, and yet, more complicated. The more we yearn to keep current – the newest phone, computer, camera, audio system, coffee maker – the more we produce, consume, and discard. ***Tech Vanitas*** references the 17th Century vanitas paintings which celebrated The Netherlands' new wealth. Just as Dutch Golden Age still lifes portray the abundance afforded a prosperous culture, ***Tech Vanitas*** embraces luxury, honors design, and acknowledges the fleeting nature of earthly pleasures.

In Adrienne Wortzel's ***EX SITU CONSERVATION: Colony Relocation for Electronic Detritus*** an inventory of machine parts and electronic elements are photographed as surviving artifacts of technologies facing obsolescence. Objects are arranged in nature, perhaps even as species threatened with extinction. Her photos are an ironic attempt at reverse psychology – a reverence of technology at any price to the environment.

Mary Mattingly's ***DRUM*** from her series ***Blockades, Boulders, Weights*** is a sculpture created from mass-produced objects the artist has collected over the years. Her goal is to create structures of bundled objects so that she is really faced with everything on which she relies and consumes. "And it's a lot", she says. Mattingly hopes to get people thinking about what we're taking from the earth, how we can use what we already have to our best advantage. Her sculptures show just how much we'd have to carry if we bundled our objects on our own backs.

The artists in ***Beautiful Obsolescence*** simultaneously critique and celebrate the multitude of objects we accumulate, to make sense of the stuff we collect in our lives. "May, Wortzel, and Mattingly are all storytellers", says McDonald Crowley. "Through arranging objects, they compose narratives that help us to make sense of the technologies and belongings that we gather around us, immortalizing them as art objects and compositions: what might be considered trash becomes beauty."