

Andrew Norman Wilson Lisa Lapinski Wilson

Human Resources / Los Angeles

The appetizer for Andrew Norman Wilson's exhibition "Pretense" was *Mosquito Computer* (2015–17), a desktop computer case converted to a tiny cinema for a colony of mosquitos living inside. The insects were being treated to 1981's award-winning *On Golden Pond*; they would live their whole lives and eventually die in this cinema.

Human Resources occupies a former Chinese movie theater; in Wilson's show the main space, the gigantic remains of the auditorium, was dominated by a loud video playing inside its own microcinema (*Ode to Seekers*, 2016). On monitors hung from the ceiling, a pair of videos (*The Unthinkable Bygone* and *Reality Models*, both 2016) could be viewed from the upstairs loft, a warren of old projection booths and offices, small and tight, while a rubber mask of Robin Williams (*Robin Williams Window Shade*, 2015) stared out through a projection hole. These efforts, spawned by an affection for cinema and mounted within the space of a defeated movie theater, felt oddly touching.

Yet the videos' content points to deep malaise: mosquitos, drugs, tubes that suck and pump — the world within these moving images is a dark system of snakes and ladders. Your own memory can't be trusted; the resources of the earth, your body/mind are pumped out and replaced by 3-D-rendered cultural waste. You are trapped in a deserted school and you'll never get out. You are a sliced and segmented baby dinosaur from a long-forgotten TV show. Wilson's videos constantly ask you to assume a position of hysterical identification with the complete exhaustion brought on by drugs/products/pop-culture artifacts that are supposed to help you manage your problems, not create new ones.

The bravura installation, when contrasted with the colony of mosquitos growing inside a sealed computer case-cum-cinema, fed on Wilson's blood, highlights in microcosm exactly the world the show at large presents: a hideous global trap, a taller-than-average white man in charge, and the sum of all our pleasure in it coming out as a wheeze of fear.

by Steve Kado

Kristina Kite / Los Angeles

There are only two living Shakers, Sister June Carpenter and Brother Arnold Hadd. The Shakers are known for their minimal, humble furniture, and given their self-imposed celibacy, you have to wonder: Was their lathing libidinal? A channeling of erotic energy into clean lines and hard surfaces? Their aesthetic was borrowed for a piece in Lisa Lapinski's recent show "Holly Hobby Lobby." Ringing the three main walls was an enlargement of a Shaker-style pegboard (the whole show was one eponymous work, 2017). While admiring the lovingly crafted finish, we find one of the pegs violently impales the face of a little girl with a topknot.

This is a painted wood figurine of Little My from the Swedish cartoon *The Moomins*. She has shown up in different forms in past exhibitions by Lapinski, but here she is either being punished for an unknown transgression or simply put into storage. But then what (or who) are the rest of the pegs for? Purchased and modified by Lapinski, the body of the Little My figurine becomes a chair, serving as an allusion to Edward Kienholz's *The Illegal Operation* (1962), which depicts the aftermath of a backroom abortion. This is no longer erotic longings turned into an elegant bench, but the anger of our current moment, in which Hobby Lobby denies contraceptive coverage to its employees based on religious fanaticism.

In the middle of the room sat wooden grid platforms on which Space Invader-like painted wood sculptures of bows — like you would find in a little girl's hair — balanced *en pointe*. Borrowed from Holly Hobbie, a children's book author and illustrator, the bows, in their sharp geometry, become vaguely menacing, the floppiness of a ribbon frozen in pixels. The sense of threat vibrating through the show seemed to concentrate in a bow with shorn off loops, like a dog with a bite taken out of its ear. Yet there were also moments of respite. A kind of bus shelter/chuppah made of caning and acrylic offered a calm space. You could stand inside it and gaze high up the wall at a neon rainbow — that exhausted symbol of hope — installed behind a screen made of the same materials as your temporary shelter.

by Asha Schechter

Dara Friedman

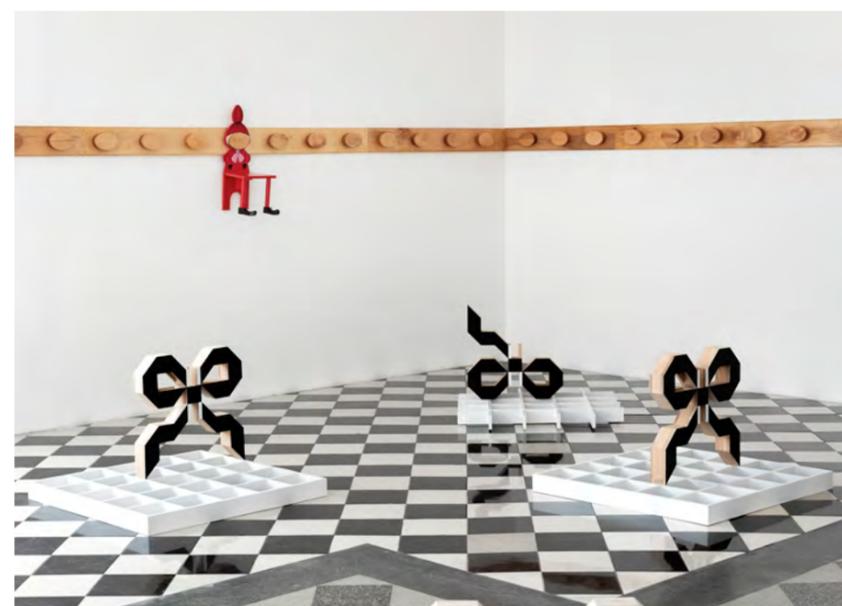
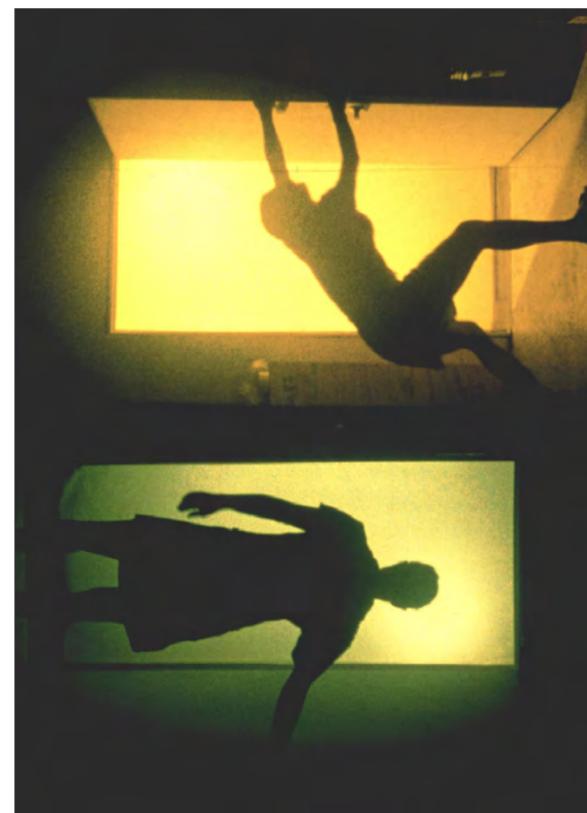
Perez Art Museum / Miami

Poststructuralist filmmaking, as a project, should allow us access to the techniques that constitute the composition and materiality of film. Dara Friedman's mid-career survey "Perfect Stranger" abandons the radicality possible within the medium in favor of non-sequitur affect-driven desire. As I entered through velvet pink curtains, the sounds of running projectors, slamming doors, lashing whips and firing guns filled my ears. Friedman's films before 2005 were neatly presented in this first room as a key to the themes of her subsequent work.

Throughout the exhibition, violent and aggressive acts were subverted into seductive gestures of materiality, without necessarily interesting results. *Whip Whipping the Wall* (1998–2002), for example, in which "the artist repeatedly lashes a wall with a bullwhip," leaves the viewer instead with unsettling questions about Friedman's motive. *PLAY (Parts 1 & 2)* (2013) is possibly the most ambitious film presented, constructed from scenes of couples and individuals and referencing all of Friedman's material, styles and motifs. As scenes collide with one another, several films come to mind: Agnes Varda's *Lions Love (... and lies)* (1969), Max Reinhardt's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935), David Lynch's *Inland Empire* (2006) and Brian De Palma's *Body Double* (1984). *PLAY* takes its viewers on a ride that explores the tropes and motifs of the LA movie, yet fails to deliver any real substance. Friedman's rules — never directly stated — don't help us understand either the function of abstraction within the filmmaking process or the empathy described at every turn in the exhibition's wall text and promotional material.

But all is not lost. The 16-mm film *Tigertail* (2007) was the most seductive and complex in the exhibition. It demonstrates a mastery of the medium's physicality by projecting a small flame on the wall, causing the lens to reflect just outside the projection field. The film successfully deconstructs the diaristic film genre into a series shots, sounds and experiments in order to do something outside of genre itself.

by Domingo Castillo



From top, clockwise:
Dara Friedman
Film still from *Bim Bam* (1999)
Courtesy of the Artist;
Institute of Contemporary
Art, Miami and Gavin Brown's
enterprise, New York

Andrew Norman Wilson
"Pretense," installation
view at Human Resources,
Los Angeles (2017)
Courtesy of the Artist; Human
Resources, Los Angeles
and Document, Chicago

Lisa Lapinski
"Holly Hobby Lobby,"
installation view at Kristina Kite
Gallery, Los Angeles (2017)
Courtesy of the Artist
and Kristina Kite Gallery,
Los Angeles
Photography by Fredrik Nilsen