

2 QUESTIONS

#3

Tom Ireland:

In the UK there is an issue with labour and associated value which seems to dictate the rhythm and path of an artworks acceptance by a wider public – I'm thinking of specific instances such as Carl Andre's bricks; *Equivalent VII* (1966). What does the work presented in *easy does it*, or indeed the exhibition platform itself offers audiences?

Kevin Hunt:

It's interesting you should ask a question like this Tom, as it is something I seem to be in much debate about recently given the premise of the exhibition, which may have been misconstrued slightly by some as being fickle or devoid of anything serious...

*I was interviewed before the first show in Glasgow and asked about my advocacy of this way of working. I touched upon the idea that *easy does it* is, in some ways a reaction against a certain type of sculpture that I'm aware of through a proliferation of shows I saw during and in the years following graduation. There was this show at the V&A ages ago called 'Spectacular Craft' or something like that, with certain works toying with a kind of tromp l'oeil effect. They looked surplus, abandoned, and very obviously wanted to be seen (at first glance) as if they were nothing much but on closer inspection the audience came to realise these things had been arduously and painstakingly produced.*

This kind of work is interesting but it's the general reaction to the discovery of its meticulous nature which really winds me up, and a certain value added by its audience just because it may have taken a long time to produce. Curated shows hanging the works off words like 'Spectacular' only serve to exaggerate this value structure. They are one-liners, and after that realisation of what is actually going on, to me, anything important seems to stop. I really do believe in the poetic and profound aspects of the most slight, minimal and casual processes, forms and gestures and the power that often beguiles their apparent manifestation.

*I suppose as the exhibitions evolve my stance on this idea is as potent as ever, although I'm coming to realise that the words 'easy' and 'simple' however flippantly applied, may associate the works in the show with something they are not. It's not an angsty stance I have, an idea like, 'this really is easy to make' or an anti craft methodology, quite the opposite really. I believe *easy* doesn't always equal superficiality just like laboriousness doesn't automatically equal substance. There is a level of craft in everything we do, and maybe in the less arduous of tasks this craft is more intuitive and eloquent which I personally find far more stimulating.*

But it's not solely up to me to prove this in any way; I'd hope the audience can figure it out for themselves.

Kevin Hunt:

How do you feel your works in *easy does it* hold up to the phrase 'I could have done that'? And how do you react to such comments?

Tom Ireland:

I think that the works in the show certainly court that kind of statement and, to be honest, the audience is probably right; they could have done it, physically speaking but that is missing the point somewhat. Of course they could have done it but it would be an arbitrary act, at which point its legitimacy comes into question.

My reaction is – acceptance. I anticipate such a statement could arise but I have confidence in my position going into such an exchange with a really casual, almost lazy, reactionary statement. Feelings of 'I could have done that' are evoked when people are confronted with something outside of their immediate environment. There is a pigeon convention in Blackpool each year which attracts an international audience of pigeon enthusiasts. In a way, a comment such as 'I could have done that' is akin to me walking into that show with its thousands of attendees and 45,000 pigeons on display and saying 'it's just a load of birds, there's loads of them outside', there is flippancy in that statement.

It's a language issue, in terms of how people interpret the physical language of art. 'Art' is a blanket term and also bound by historical conventions and individual difference.

I think artists should be accountable and responsible and I'm a fan of criticism. I'm interested in exchanges which test the validity of my position; someone asking 'why?' is brilliant but sweeping statements aren't so good because they are really coming from a closed position to begin with.

www.tomirelandhq.org.uk

easy does it is an evolving trilogy of exhibitions curated by Kevin Hunt examining the complexity inherent within the simplest of actions. The exhibition is touring between David Dale Gallery, Glasgow, Aid & Abet, Cambridge and Supercollider, Blackpool throughout 2013.

Each week for the duration of *easy does it* at Aid & Abet, (the second of the trilogy of exhibitions) two questions were posed and answered in a set of brief conversations between Kevin Hunt and an artist in the exhibition.