MAKING IT HARDER THAN IT HAS TO BE or THIS IS THE SCULPTURE or *SIGH

Todd Barry

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Recommended Citation
Barry, Todd, "MAKING IT HARDER THAN IT HAS TO BE or THIS IS THE SCULPTURE or *SIGH" (2014). Undergraduate Theses—Unrestricted. 23. https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/undergrad_open/23
MAKING IT HARDER THAN IT HAS TO BE or

THIS IS THE SCULPTURE or

*SIGH

Todd Barry's

BFA STATEMENT FINAL DRAFT¹

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Sculpture Major

studying at the Sam Fox School of Art and Design of Washington University in Saint Louis in the year 2014 in the month of May at the moment

""__(o_O)__/""

¹ This is a participatory project. It is the nature of the form. Its reading will be greatly enhanced if one actively engages with the text.
here is an

**ABSTRACT**

ion

of what’s going on

in the pages that follow...

You will be punched in the face and then poked in the side

(it seems, someone, has something, to say)

You start off with a *slow* looking-back – making a steady assumption

You take that assumption, *open it up* – into elaboration, and sing the thing

*RIGH ON* out of itself

You sculpt

You step back

You say, ‘wait a minute – relax’

You wake up, wiggle toes, wait for [something], move, make~ into

[something], and stand by it

You laugh, get grounded, fight your way outside, come back, and take care of things

You feel, in form

You go back at it, and get it out – there

(there) You endure, go away, gather, and, get, back, in again, and again, and again

You lose

It’s nothing

Together – it’s [something]...
you see
I have this philosophy
with regards to the written word
and all creation I suppose
that if it doesn't come RUSHING out of you
then
DON'T
WASTE
MY TIME

but I suppose
if you want
the bullshit
there's always
plenty
in storage

but let's not go
there

let's go
way
back
after all,
que sais-je?

... ... ... ... ... ...

CHAPTER I. Ethos

Horace
a quiet meditative man
and/or a clement Epicurean with a strong conviction by means of moralism
alive at the tail end of the Greek Hellenistic Period
fond of philosophy, a slower country life, afternoons of study, and
(preumably) letter-writing, for today, we are left only with his two/part
Epistles (or ‘letters’), wherein, he writes

*ut pictura poesis*

or, like a picture, poetry

_______________________________

3 beginning
3 and end of artist statement
4 ‘what do I know?’ - the spirit of unknowing to be exemplified and finally resolved, like Montaigne, through an essay form (such as this)
words, known nowadays as our bedrock text forging a connection between things visual and those verbal in THE ARTS.

but for the sake of our story, let’s say... as is poetry, so is installation art. 

now

let us LEAP forward THROUGH TIME to the early 14th Century when Dante writes his famous epic poem, ‘The Divine Comedy’ in its second part Purgatorio is depicted as an upwardly spiraling climb around a mountain much like the low-relief sculptures of Trajan’s column in Rome later in the poem (CANTO X)

Dante in fact portrays the bereaved mother coming across the famous column, referring to their subsequent dialogue as esto visibleparlare (or, ‘this visible speaking’) somehow this sculpture has SPOKEN

... ... ... ... ...

Chapter II. I see my work as a WAKE UP call

I want to find a silence and take that silence and have it HUMmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm everyone I intend [sculpture] to talk

I like wandering around and finding things to write on more OPEN than a notebook or a novel those always feel a bit CLOSED to me

some things are better left closed, but it seems I have no choice

OPEN UP sometimes less isn’t more

I hope I can open the right books for people socialize sometimes share anyhow

I want to make everyone understand

----

5 this is a claim
6 this is also a claim
that it's ok to not understand
that it's ok to be not okay

I propose to not just PLAY AROUND
to say what I want to say
in a nonbookvisualartwritingway

materials⁷ bore me...

except, like
toothbrushes

nail clippers too

like the other morning
my suitemate came up to me in our living room when I was
'working on things' on my laptop and began galloping his nail clipper
on the table toward my hand making little 'eeee' and 'oooo' noises of
supposed pleasure or vague desire or curiosity or anxiousness idk

i felt alert

less miserable

the other night
we were talking about⁸ the possibility of us humans all being trees that,
just like, dropped seeds everywhere instead of having sex and stuff because i
was holding half of a seed he had recently collected and placed on our dining
room table, and i had tossed it to him and he had tossed it back and i thought
he made a crack about his seed referencing his semen when he hadn't really
meant it like that but we started talking about the treelike seed-dropping sex
scenario anyhow, and then the word 'wind' came up, afterwhich i said (in a
sort of self-mockingly ashamed manner) how we all, really were, just 'blowin
in the wind' i guess, afterwhich he said a lotta phrases ending with something
like the fact that yes -- and all he really wanted was a little 'shelter from the
storm'

(no one's gonna get that i don't think
those were bob dylan references)

you see though?

it spurred something

an object
got us going

an object
should

GET YOU GOING

i dont know about you
but i'll make art 'till my face falls off and i can't feel my toes
just the way it goes

living sux

---

⁷ clay for example. I used to be obsessed, now, not so much.
⁸ art is...
art's better

that'll be my next sculpture.

...or maybe this:

GIVE ME MONEY
I'M WEAK
HELP
ART SUX
GIVE ME MONEY
I'M WEAK
HELP
ART SUX
GIVE ME MONEY
I'M WEAK
HELP
ART SUX
GIVE ME MONEY
I'M WEAK
HELP
ART SUX
GIVE ME MONEY
I'M WEAK
HELP
ART SUX
GIVE ME MONEY
I'M WEAK
HELP
ART SUX

now don't get me wrong...

I like doing art
while sitting
while standing up
while throwing up
in the middle of the night
at noon
crepuscule
dawn

fuck it I'll sit here
playing the fool for days

but unfortunately

---

9 an expression of pessimism
10 = doing art
various bodily functions
are rather limiting
and I routinely
get taken advantage of
it's a doggy dog world
i'm more of a cat person myself
...

Chapter III. the area of pause

you see

Writing is also my cat. Writing lets me face it. It chills me out. For a while anyhow. Then my wires get crossed and I have to do it all over again. I can't understand writers who decide to stop writing. How do they chill out?

Bukowski said that. and good god...

there is nothing wrong
with resting

yes it's nice
to be sleeping

when I want
to be sleeping

overambition
is a condition
worth
proper recognition

some people enjoy
thinking about sex
I enjoy
thinking about
not thinking

nothing matters
but sometimes
the matter
that is nothing
becomes meaningful

ripening

pre-Snoop Dogg: “dog-eat-dog world”
slowly building up power
from solitude
I have worked hard
for this space
haven't I?
gazing out of windows
putting off everything
how beautiful it is
to be nothing
to be nowhere
finally

...
...
...
...

Chapter IV. And then usually / the wind is part of the process, the rain is part of the process

I like staying in bed for long extended periods of time before getting up and doing things because I usually never want to do much of anything besides occasionally read a book or check my email or masturbate or drink water or pee or something but usually I just like staying in bed doing nothing for long extended periods of time before getting up and doing something like eating cereal

And then I often watch movies that I don't actually like but seem familiar enough to something I would actually like, that I passively accept their shortcomings in stride before slowly realizing what it is that I really like (which most often isn't even a movie at all)

And then I think about that (what I like)

– some writer, some mystery, some zone where fields zig-zag and swerve, some space of practicality that escapes me

And then I try and take that silence and screw-- with it

with whatever the hell happens to be in front of me

paint pens
sharpies
writing visual

on

wood panels styrofoam

drywall
whatever found
that moves me around
really anything thick enough
to pick up and put up somewhere to be SEEN sculpturally then I think (I)
my work should make the
the last thing I want to do is write something STALE and so
journalistic jazz i will continue to toot my visual poem horn no matter how torn they take me every god damn trace is my statement of intent
...
...
...
...
Chapter V. but really...
I’m just playing with puzzles and calling it practice I need to make amends with the mundane I’ve been here before I know this now my artwork is eating away at me the atrophy of imagination I’m getting carried away caught in the clouds I gotta calm myself disarm and come down to face the facts of the farm
training of the body must take precedence over training of thought if it is to create and supervise its own ideas... 

I knew only too well the deceitful nature of any kind of conflict in art. If I must have a struggle, I felt I should take the offensive in fields outside art; in art, I should defend my citadel. It was necessary to be a sturdy defender within art, and a good fighter outside it.

Yukio Mishima said that and I agree.

there's nothing to prove nothing to promote but I do like a poem that feels well-fought

the way I see it lively up yourself or else...

fall into disrepair as have the st. louis warehouses of old, since enveloped by rust and sadness as Evan Pellervo put it

... ... ... ... ...

Chapter VI. once YOU are all taken care of...

*il faut cultiver notre jardin* as Candide

water the plants buy the groceries clean the kitchen do the laundry feed the baby organize categorize socialize!

---

once YOU are all taken care of, you must

FIGHT for your right to party but I mean, really... PARTIES, WRITE POETRY
make some money

Chapter VII. you got away from it
but you’ve got to feel first

Mary Jo Bang describes PUNCTUM as the ability of the photograph to cause actual exquisite physical pain to a person.

all art can do this so I suppose depression and art often come hand in hand it’s a bit heavy realizing nothing is beautiful and you’re gonna have to do it by your own damn self but you get over it I guess

Chapter VIII. you do

Pamela Alexander writes, Consider events as places to live, and paragraphing as paper sculpture.

me I use text as material alone... the artist is an asshole but at least he keeps

\[14\] Just like you and I...
to himself

the real artist doesn’t talk
you don’t see the real artist
the real artist toils

the real artist has no time

but oh!
sometimes the art just flows
and you just have to stop
thinking

you

woke it up

now work with it

the foxes are dancing around you

congratulations

it’s about
damn
time

now

do it

well

I’m watching

not really
I’m probably

installing

after all

the work is not the sculpture ¹⁵ as Nicola Carrino would say

or

the art/isn’t/the hard/part ¹⁶ as I would

according to Carrino

the work itself does not even exist

– only its project does

in the end, to create

collective participation... ix

are you with me?

are you angry?

don’t be...

see

if I were to have an artist’s manifesto

here’s the way it would go:

I do not want to argue with you.

¹⁵ this is a claim

¹⁶ this is a more universal elaboration of that claim
Chapter IX. WAGING WAR/BATTLING FOR EXISTENCE/THE CRITIQUE

as previously stated

ideally

the work does the talking but academia is demanding

and so

you get this

superficial seriousness-

-artspeak-

-zombie-made scenario

you see

the critique is a pretend game

where it is very important to block out the information that it is a pretend game

often

a cursory glance

followed by talkingtalkingtalkingtalkingtalkingtalking

followed by an appraisal of excellence within imaginary standards

oftentimes (being)
a disorienting estrangement

but every once in a while

some blithe reassurance

often people say ‘oh but

other artists use text

it reminds me of [famous artist]’

William Powhida

a modern day ‘text artist’

who enjoys poking fun at well-off art world people through cynical colorful personal but unpoetic
longhandings would say that really means it’s\textsuperscript{17} such a rip off\textsuperscript{xii}

yes yes we are swimming with big fish we cannot see probably...

Chapter X. digestion/reaction/resolution

\textit{a professor is someone who talks in someone else’s sleep}\textsuperscript{xvii} Auden said that but ultimately it’s up to the artist

you react you react you react you react you react

\textit{sometimes a man must fight so hard for life that he doesn’t have time to live it}\textsuperscript{xiii} Bukowski said that little by little the mind is lost

the grind begins

so as per Schopenhauer there would be less suffering in our world if people greeted eachother with instead of (some) ‘sir’ (equivalent)

and I agree have mercy

\textsuperscript{17} (your art)
you see
to much compromise
reason doesn’t mean much of anything
sure, severity has its cycles
but it’s a slow stubborn beating either way
you know you know
that good old, ever so gradual decay
we are toppling!
on fire!
always!
let’s face it
might as well sip on French wine
sit around the fire
and chill out while we can, when we’re capable
seems the best way to cope
some holy space of unkinking, unthinking, unlearning\(^{18}\)
and then starting all over again, from square one
I guess that’s all that matters and ever will
some satisfiable sitting still
I only hope they have free halos in heaven
either that or some decent horns in hell
one can only wait and see
just the way it goes
what it is
no one knows
keeps you right on the tip of your toes
surprise, the element
the skies won’t say a thing
and the sun
too will be spun
spit out into spacelessness
every single start, unstoppably unstable
we have no choice but to entangle ourselves in intimacy
and wait for sparks\(^{19}\) to begin speaking.

---

\(^{18}\) the aforementioned ‘area of pause’ is, finally, not entirely exclusive to one’s solitude, but can be understood and seen in solidarity

\(^{19}\) the art follows.
andthere's


