Can you speak about their function, and how they will change over the course of the exhibition?

thinking about these when I decided to cut into the gallery walls.

openings in walls created to reveal the historic layers, or special materials inside. I was

series of possibilities. There are also these things called “truth windows” in a lot of buildings;

Some of my sculptures directly quote the forms of his drawings. I was also interested in how

late artist Ernst Benkert. I was particularly interested in Benkert’s drawings from a series

I had seen inside of walls, often formed over years of repair, and a series of drawings by the

wall framing. The shapes I came up with were influenced by both unusual stud formations

CH:  The sculptures were made with the idea that they would fit between studs in standard

wall framing. The shapes I came up with were influenced by both unusual stud formations

I had seen inside of walls, often formed over years of repair, and a series of drawings by the

late artist Ernst Benkert. I was particularly interested in Benkert’s drawings from a series

called Stackheads—abstract black ink drawings made within a rectangle, often with ears.

Some of my sculptures directly quote the forms of his drawings. I was also interested in how

both the dimensions and standard layout of stud set spatial limits that allow an endless

series of possibilities. There are also these things called “truth windows” in a lot of buildings;

openings in walls created to reveal the historic layers, or special materials inside. I was

thinking about these when I decided to cut into the gallery walls.

DN: The Hedge integrates photographic backdrops, or “grounds,” behind the sculptures.

Can you speak about their function, and how they will change over the course of the exhibition?

The Hedge

JANUARY 18 —APRIL 14, 2013

Toby Devan Lewis Gallery

Corin Hewitt uses exhibition spaces as sites for production and speculation. Integrating

process and display strategies, Hewitt offers viewers the simultaneous encounter of an artwork

and the action that brought it about to be. For his installation at MOCA Cleveland, Hewitt has

developed a compressed space inside the gallery walls, allowing him to work in close proximity

to viewers while remaining unseen. The Hedge is composed of an array of elements that will

shift over the course of the exhibition: sculptures nestled between exposed studs; backdrops,

or “grounds,” made with photographs of Hewitt’s studio; and vibrantly painted domestic

objects integrated into both. Figurative and personal, these elements coalesce in the shallow

depth of the walls, accumulating in dense layers of images and material in transformation.

CH: The grounds, together with the stud sculptures, put two different sets of walls in

conversation: the walls of my studio in Richmond, where the backdrops were originally

photographed, and those of MOCA Cleveland, where the sculptures are inset. So, the sites

of production and display are visually brought together, and also linked by the sounds of

work going on behind the walls. I will be casting, painting, and rearranging specific objects

I’ve selected. These objects will accumulate around the sculptures and will also get scanned,

photographed, and collaged onto the backdrops. I am thinking about walls as three-dimensional

spaces that also promise a surface. Through shifting figure/ground relationships, this piece

tries to consider that complex density.

DN: Individually, the objects you are working with are the kinds of things that surround you

each day—they’re ordinary and useful. Yet collectively, they project a playful awkwardness.

CH: I like that you say “awkwardness.” I hope that they are awkward due to the fact that they

are unexpected combinations. The objects are very particular in how I consider them: they are

all fresh starts or foundations. Pieces of toast, for example, are like blank canvases or blank

walls to hang things on. Foundation makeup, rubber gloves, crackers, and flash drives contain

all fresh starts or foundations. Pieces of toast, for example, are like blank canvases or blank

walls to hang things on. Foundation makeup, rubber gloves, crackers, and flash drives contain

similar logic for me.

DN: By breaking down these tactile and familiar objects, you offer them a self-renewing

potential.

CH: I think of them as building blocks in a way, in terms of how words relate to language.

I like the idea of art proposing semantic structures, but at the same time I want to make

it hard to think about this piece through words. I use the objects, materials, and surfaces

as a kind of Morse code of sensory expressions. When I am working on an installation,

I get really close to the material—my actions come out as bodily messages. Architect

Ettore Sottsass has this great quote, “Sensornality destroys ideology, it is anarchical,

private...it opens up new avenues.” I hope that the way I layer objects in my work opens

up a new way to speak to the mind through the body.

1 Sottsass as quoted by Barbara Radice in Memph: Research, Experiences, Results, Failures, and Successes of New Design (New York: Rizzoli, 1984): 142.

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SPONSORS

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CORIN HEWITT

Corin Hewitt (1971, Burlington, VT) lives and works in Richmond, VA. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Atlanta Contemporary Art Center; and Seattle Art Museum. Hewitt has been awarded a Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, and a Painters and Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award for Fine Art. His work is represented by Laurel Gitlen, New York.

All photos are process images for The Hedge by Corin Hewitt.