

example in *Untitled* (Bovine eggs) where a crude wire-spiral bowl holds a collection of rounded iron rocks that were recovered from a cow's digestive system. But banking on a nostalgia for pleasure in well-crafted intimate objects, the artist lapses into a narcissistic reverie, wrapping each of her objects with the caress of the maker. Though beautiful, her objects too easily appear as typically fecund and mysterious symbols of Natural Womanhood. By perpetuating the mystique of an emblematic Other, further stultified by a preciousness of display, Newman only contributes to the marginalization of the female that solidly separates the possibilities of social change (alchemy) from the common girl.

Distanced from our physical bodies, our ordinary acts are degraded and separated from us.

—Frederickson & Peterson

Laurel Frederickson and Susan Peterson filled the University of Illinois's Gallery 400 (September 17–28) with tight rows of large, modular green-and-yellow plastic enclosures, each glowing with internal light. The installation referenced the geometric repetitions of a formalist minimalism—the fabricated modules loomed as phenomenologically potent beings. The artists fully exploited the possibilities of minimalism's physical theatricality, mixing in a heavy dose of Duchampian irony, to effectively deflate a formal claim to self-referentiality: the modules were Port-o-Sans. Stripped of commercial signage, recontextualized in a gallery space (odor free), the efficient designs, elegantly grouped, approached but were denied aestheticization, burdened by their associative history. Unlike most other appropriate cultural artifacts, the portable toilet immediately referenced a specific circumstance wherein the usually manageable codes of physical privacy are subjected to the smelly embrace of the social. And one out

of three stalls was “unoccupied,” inviting entry—challenging the intrepid observer to overcome fears that mixed an urgent physical necessity with an abhorrent sensual experience—potty training jammed up against the resentment of having to become, reluctantly, a member of the masses.

The Port-o-Sans, enclaves of privacy in the midst of a public space, serve as solicitous encasements that allow for the body to disencumber itself of excrement, thereby violating (in a daily devotion) the primacy of the self-contained individual. The lone solid body becomes a fluid part of a societal continuum. Observers of this installation revealed their fear of this juncture, unwilling to enter. Those that ventured in found occasional clues, left by Frederickson & Peterson, that circumscribed the layers of intimacy proportional to the bathroom experience. In one stall crickets chirped, the nostalgia of the outhouse mixed with the intrasigencies of the urban: they looked just like cockroaches. In another, a mattress pad, which often soaks up wet dreams, was placed under the toilet seat, covering the hole. A family photo album, chronicling generic emotions, sat in one stall; a pair of men's underwear was thrown into the corner of another. These personal details were mixed with examples of interfacing with the social. A woman's purse, complete with snapshots, money, and tampons, left in a stall, invited a violation of privacy. A plate left for tips beside a basin of water and clean towels alluded to a class privilege that can afford to purchase privacy and cleanliness.

In the midst of an excremental culture, wherein new sciences are developed to transfigure removal of waste to a scientifically sublime transubstantiation, Frederickson & Peterson quietly illustrated the locale of these urges in the psychological separation of the (human) inside with the (social) outside.

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