



## 500 WORDS

RECENT   ARCHIVE

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NEWS   DIARY   PICKS

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 Danilo Correale and Anna Franceschini  
 Dan Steinhilber  
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 Al Taylor  
 Feng Mengbo  
 Rubén Gilo  
 "Process 01: Joy"  
 Valerio Carrubba  
 Charlotte Moth  
 Michelle Stuart

## Justin Matherly

10.31.11



View of "Readjusting my commitment to a greater legibility, or substance thinking and substance extended," 2011. Justin Matherly, *Matter asks no questions, expects no answers from us, it ignores us (ordering crystals to assume another form of existence)*, 2011, ink-jet monoprint, spray paint, 21 1/2 x 15 1/2".

The Brooklyn-based artist Justin Matherly has participated in numerous group shows, including the 2010 White Columns Annual and SculptureCenter's In Practice Projects. He is known for his large-scale cast concrete sculptures and statues that often feature ambulatory walkers and other medical devices. Here he discusses his exhibition at Bureau, which is on view in New York until December 18.

**READING IS FUNDAMENTAL** to my process. There are other elements at play throughout, but text—thought—is the overall structuring element that permits entry for me in terms of the specificity of a project. How the ideas connect to one another, what sort of interaction is created, and how something affects another thing is the process, which is arrived at through a combination of inherently open intuitive reasoning and factual reasoning.

I am currently reading Malevich's essays on Suprematism, Spinoza's *Ethics*, and various texts from Johann Winckelmann through to German Romanticism. The cast of characters that informs my work is continually growing, and they are always ready to be of assistance when called upon. There is never really a final end to a project, just material points created along the way. Consequently, the engagement with the textual within my process is meant not as an illustration of this or that thought—or text—but as an intensive engagement designed to concretize the thought, so to speak, and to employ it as any other material for building—effectively subsuming the text, idea, line of reasoning, et cetera, within the work so that it is as inseparable from the object as its final material form is. And so the text doesn't remain apart from the object; it is buried fully within the work and becomes part of its fabric.

I have begun to utilize a bulletin board as a mnemonic device with which to structure a project. I arrange images, notes, and more on the wall in such a way that things can easily be removed, covered, or added. This happens in conjunction with reading and manifests the first incarnation of the ideas for a work. Once the ideas and forms are clear and distinct (as much as is possible) in my mind, I usually create a "positive" form out of rigid foam, utilizing both additive and subtractive methods, from the chosen reference image. This foam "version" is only a further attempt at understanding and is how, at that point, I understand the original form. In other words, this "version" is now the original form that dictates the structure of the final object in that it will become the actual interior of the cast concrete form and will, finally, be discarded.

The materials used for casting this final object—a combination of Tree Gators, rigid foam, brush-on polyurethane rubber, and hot glue—are chosen for their flexibility and, as opposed to the idea of a traditional mold, which is to reproduce precisely a form, for their inherent inability to do exactly that. This requires me to rethink the form in its negative existence and to react appropriately to follow this or that line or curve, directing the object to a greater or lesser extent.

The material is then cast in concrete. I trust it will do what it will. The combination of concrete with the unpredictable mold is what ultimately determines the final form.

— As told to Lauren O'Neill-Butler

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