

Natalie Beall

Pastimes



March 2 – April 8, 2023

Morgan Lehman is pleased to present “Pastimes”, an exhibition of recent sculptures and collages by Natalie Beall. This marks the artist’s first solo show with the gallery.

Natalie Beall creates paper collages and mixed media wall sculptures depicting what she describes as, “invented objects that hover between functionality and fantasy”. The works are elegantly spare and symmetrical. They are also mysterious in that they point to notions of usefulness while remaining purely aesthetic entities. Within Beall’s visual lexicon, forms such as grids, hooks, and holes make reference to various utilitarian origins (including peg racks and corset laces), but move beyond functionality into a realm of wonder. These forms often appear flattened and pared down, suggesting a surrealistic suspension between the everyday and the imagination.

The artist finds inspiration in an array of sources, often quietly comical, including open-ended learning toys, ambiguous storage devices, and obsolete domestic implements. In working from source imagery associated with the domestic domain, Beall embraces a lineage of traditionally undervalued functions and pursuits that hold real meaning-making potential. As individuals, we come into contact with domestic objects each day, but rarely ponder the lives of these items beyond their obvious functions. Beall is intrigued by the underlying energy and mystique of such inanimate objects, as well as what they say about us.

This artist’s methodology in creating her sculptures is solitary, intuitive, and physical. Beall uses humble materials that she can manipulate with ease in her home studio: wood, epoxy and foam clays, and assorted trimmings such as rope. Beginning with the idea of a form of something tangible (often an object that might catch the artist’s eye in a thrift store), Beall then reconfigures this form through an organic process of abstraction and reinvention. The end result is a sculpture that feels eerily familiar but is entirely new.

In 2014, Beall expanded her studio process to include working with cut paper in order to work through forms in two dimensions. Like the sculptures, these paper collages speak to the uncanny, but operate more imagistically, and at a standardized scale. The conversations between the collages and sculptures further question the nature of the strange articles depicted, and invite the viewer to ponder the very process of aesthetic transformation itself.

Natalie Beall (b. 1981, Atlanta, GA) earned her BFA from the University of Georgia and her MFA from Columbia University. Beall has participated in exhibitions at Fridman Gallery (Beacon, NY); Good Naked Gallery (Brooklyn, NY); Standard Space (Sharon, CT); the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art (New Paltz, NY); and the Wassaic Project (Wassaic, NY); among other venues. Residencies include the Saltonstall Foundation (Ithaca, NY); the Lighthouse Works (Fishers Island, NY); the Cooper Union (New York, NY); and the Lower East Side Printshop (New York, NY). The artist is a 2017 NYSCA/NYFA Fellow in Printmaking/Drawing/Book Arts and was recently featured in *Art Maze Magazine*. She lives and works in Salt Point, New York.