

Please, tell me a story...

Literal Narrative art is predominant in this city. In most galleries, there are sculpture installations, large photographic images and paintings that dwell almost exclusively on social and political issues or replays of popular culture. I shouldn't complain, art has been narrative for most of human history and art is an entertainment. As an artist living here I concede this reality but also note that there is a history of abstract, contemplative art that is equally as long. For New York and most of the western world, serving up an engaging story has become the accepted standard. Sometimes it is sublime but now, more often, it is quickly cooked, cut up and ready to eat. Let me find a part of myself in something that is nonverbal, inferential and takes some time. There are very few galleries that offer that experience right now.

My work may be dumb, but it's not stupid...

Last winter, I had a pile of junk mail from various banks offering me loans and credit cards that was so large, my shredder died. That, along with the hours of shredding that I had spent to kill it, was exasperating. Commerce and popular culture are grabbing me and shaking me by the shoulders for attention every minute of the day. The always hard to sell notion of paring something down and distilling it to make it universal, is becoming even more rare and few are buying it. The work I do is actually packed with narrative. During the hours spent fabricating my sculpture, I've had plenty of time to ponder the forces that have shaped my work. I could write an "artist's statement" about my terrible childhood, vision problems, even pre-natal memories (!). It's not necessary to spell it out. Simple (not really that simple) forms can elicit universal experiences. The reductive art that I admire is not "what you want it to be" as some would describe non-objective painting and sculpture. It is what the artist has contrived for you to find in yourself, without distraction.

- Richard Bottwin