



Ingress, installation view.

Empire of Things, Made Work and the Familiarity of Found Work

The Roost
 1100 Santa Fe
 Kansas City
Ingress.
 Carie Musick Allman
 and Daniela Londono-Rojas
 May 25, 2013

By BLAIR SCHULMAN

Ingress, a dual presentation from Carie Music Allman and Daniela Londono-Rojas were two individual pop-up installations (on view to the public only one day) that dovetailed nicely with one another to create a whole experience. For the two recent Kansas City Art Institute graduates, their advantage comes from the space itself. By not having to rely solely on the work we can appreciate how important environment plays a role in installation art. The Roost is a fine collective studio and alternative gallery/venue in the West Bottoms, creating a readymade atmosphere. Spaces like this are a good reason why the gallery world in Kansas City continues to thrive. As of this writing, however, the current principals (Brandon Frederick, Ben Hlavacek, and Stephanie Bloss) will vacate this address for an as yet unknown location. I look forward to wherever they end up.

To return to the work on hand, there is an idea that combining made and found objects into a space creates a relatable encounter for the viewer. Familiarity triggers memories of self that seems to be the point of *Ingress*; having personal reactions to what we see and how we experience it. This necessitates the visitor to embrace a certain suspension of disbelief and traverse the cerebral and actual worlds. The below ground,



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windowless space helps exaggerate such feelings when there are no other secondary or tertiary distractions.

Allman's personal narrative *Studio Retrospective* (mixed media, 2011-2013) suggests a domesticity that could be seen as a prison or a confinement. Within this corner, Allman erected neutral palettes of furnishings, a hanging dress and needlepoint samplers. Among them were eight video channels (comprised of iPads and iPhones) displayed on walls and ledges. It seemed everything was presented haphazardly, and in far too great an abundance, which affirms a theory, does being attached to things and hoarding them become a security blanket? Conceptual artist Barbara Kruger summed it up best, "I shop therefore I am."

Shadows and light play a large role in *Neurons & Synapsis* (2013, crochet pods, lights, sound) and Londono-Rojas' *Studio Retrospective #1, 2, and 3* (all 2013, all mixed media installation). Londono-Rojas embraces the character of the space her work occupies by intuitively arranging her own materials with pieces already there. Gym lockers, silver ladders, even photographs have individual illuminations thanks to the obtuse lighting already in place and whatever else Londono-Rojas installed.

In *Neurons & Synapsis* we were missing the sound that was promised, but I wondered later on if we were meant to hear people touching and maneuvering in and around the pods, asking, "I don't hear anything. Do you?" which become an audio loop all its own. The crocheted pods' drooping teardrops were perceived as something one might see in a South American rain forest, the fibers felt wet and viscous too. Although this style doesn't come too close to American artist Jessie Hemmons' yarnbombing techniques, it is something I hope to not see too much of as the trend is bordering on cliché.

With both *Neurons & Synapsis* and *Studio Retrospective #1, 2, and 3*, I was glad to see the work bleed more into the environment. Interaction without a sure footing amongst these spaces elicited confused responses that were highlighted and disarmament moved to the fore. It became awkward for the audience on how they should tread, which can be fun to witness.

As a child, I really thought the 21st century would be a world of smooth, modulated plastics and jet packs, but these artists' renderings speak to a progression towards home, spirituality, and the importance of our pasts, albeit on a very rudimentary scale. For some time, I have felt the sensation, and have seen it in other artists work too, there is an acceptance of the future with a wistful nostalgia for a simpler time as cultural, environmental and political situations affect our existence. Analog, handcrafted, homemade, organic and vintage are current buzz words dedicated to living a strong pastoral resoluteness, fighting against the tidal forces of change. To label this artistic moment, or movement, as trite or mimicry is missing the point. As long as there is new ownership with thoughts and processes rather than feeling remorse for the sanctity of an already developed idea, there will be an actuation of innovation.



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