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Steven Cybulka
Umbra
2 - 27 May 2018

Adelaide-based sculptor, Steven Cybulka, uses architectural interventions to explore inner unrest. His new body of work, *Umbra*, takes its name from the darkest part of a shadow. Churning surfaces are created on acrylic sheets using spray paint, paper, and epoxy resin. Cybulka works instinctively, the final image forming under his fingers, guided by the materials themselves. The resulting shapes are formed organically, with deep, moving surfaces of cloud-like swirls, mirroring our interior thoughts.

Audiences have become used to the gallery as a white cube, walls that are, as Brian O'Doherty described, 'unshadowed, white, clean, artificial.'^{*} When artworks enter they are seemingly removed from all outside context. These spaces are designed to allow quiet contemplation of each object, unfettered by these influences. Cybulka interrupts this quiet space of contemplation with the installation of jagged forms, growing from walls and plinths. There is movement on each surface; giving the impression of smoke or dust continuously swirling within the acrylic frames. Hints of gold lace their way through these clouds, flashes of illumination shaping the surface. The shapes are formed by sharp corners and wide angles, the traditional right angles nowhere in sight. There is a sense that these forms are exploding out, growing and threatening to consume the gallery.

Drawn to the work of psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, Cybulka explores the shadow of the self, the parts we keep hidden but bubble away beneath our surface. Thoughts that linger, working away at us until, like the works here, they are barely contained. In his studio, Cybulka worries away at the materials. His sculptures are formed through a repeated process of papering, spray painting, and tearing, working towards achieving a balance in the composition. Known for working on a monumental scale, *Umbra* is by contrast a grouping of smaller doubts, worries that gently whisper constantly throughout our lifetime. These objects solidify the voice in our head that criticises and cannot be quieted.

In a room of rich, textural surfaces and jagged edges, Cybulka moves these fears from a niggling feeling into something solid that we can approach, touch and attempt to confront. Each piece reflects back the worries and concerns of the onlooker, inviting us to engage in moments of contemplation and drawing us back into our shadow world.

Eleanor Scicchitano
Curator and writer

^{*} O'Doherty, B. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. United States of America: The Lapis Press (1986). p.15

Steven Cybulka completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts at Adelaide College of the Arts in 2013, and was awarded the Arts Excellence Award (Sculpture). In 2016 he received his Honours degree (First Class) at the South Australia School of Art, Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia. In 2014 Cybulka was the inaugural Adelaide Festival Centre/SALA Artist in Residence at the Adelaide Festival Centre, and in 2016 he was commissioned to create a large scale site responsive sculpture to act as the framework for the prestigious Primavera: Young Australian Artists exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Cybulka presented his first interstate solo exhibition, *Searching Shadows*, at Interlude Gallery, Sydney.

Cybulka is currently developing commissions for SA Power Networks, Adelaide, and Sound Passage, in collaboration between the South Australian Government and the West Java Government in Bandung, Indonesia. In 2018 he will take part in the SITUATE Art in Festivals Lab, at the Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart.



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