

# Art LTD January/February 2017



"GRAY MANDATES," 2016, Ragen Moss  
INSTALLATION VIEW PHOTO COURTESY REDLING FINE ART

## LOS ANGELES

### Ragen Moss: "Gray Mandates" at Redling Fine Art

In "Gray Mandates," Ragen Moss presents six L-shaped, partially transparent sculptural objects made of polychromed plastic. Suspended from the ceiling, these large-scale works resemble inflated plastic pillows floating in the gallery space. The enigmatic works are bulbous, balloon-like multi-dimensional containers, and according to Moss, function like building blocks that can be stacked, nested or hung in any direction. They are sparsely installed parallel and perpendicular to the gallery walls, blocking sightlines and creating a loose maze through which the viewer must navigate. Viewers can look both at and through the body-sized objects. Decorated with patterns and swatches of gestural paint, as well as with hand-written texts on both their inside and outside surfaces, they are simultaneously opaque and transparent.

Moss fills the works with appropriated texts from official US statutory descriptors for *object*, *site*, *structure*, *museum*, *building* and *district*. The academic diction of the text anchors the works in the conceptual and architectural realm. In *Untitled (Site, Object, Structure)*, (all works 2016), hand-scrawled letters in all capitals fill a Pepto-Bismol colored ground. Key words are selectively highlighted as if with a yellow marker. Moss focuses on the "functional, aesthetic, cultural, historical or scientific value" of an

object and how clusters can be interrelated. *Untitled (Site)* is loosely painted in modulated blue hues bisected by a vertical white stripe. The word "SITE" fills the bottom half of one side of the sculpture, where from the verso, the letter I appears through the transparent surface. The other pieces also require viewing from multiple perspectives.

Moss intermingles form and content, questioning the categorization of ideas pertaining to architecture, place, and geography. The neutral gray of the exhibition's title becomes a wash of colors as each of the six sculptures explores a different mandate, or series of mandates. Through the careful layering and juxtaposition of color, texture and language, Moss weaves a path through the labyrinth of official diction suggesting that visual and textual fragments can indeed create a curious new whole.

—JODY ZELLEN