

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FANTASTIC

The terms 'fluidity' and 'urge to morph' best describe the character of Constance Lowe's drawings and felt constructions. Her work presents a carefully balanced juxtaposition of thought and practice, illusion and materiality, fixation and displacement. It behaves in ways not generally expected from drawing or sculpture thereby opening it up to different limits, possibilities and definitions.

One of the major questions her work evokes is this: although her work appears to be 'abstract', is it? Though her drawings engender multiple resemblances and associations, they concentrate on a form of illusionism (in the magical sense) resembling 'paintings', watercolors, or digital images. The apparent abstraction' of her images is also undermined by their readymade source, inkblots. Lowe's images are incredibly complex and painstakingly composed colored pencil drawings. The beauty and intense coloration of these vivid images obscure a scarcely conceivable amount of labor. Her furry, anonymous pencil strokes leave almost no evidence of her hand, concealing her means of constructing the image. Her hand-sewn wool felt pieces apply the same meticulous techniques of fabrication in contrast with the idiosyncratic nature of the inkblot image.

There is a thin line separating the illusion of a thing and the characteristic of the two-dimensional image. Physical reality refers, in a generalized fashion, to the tangible, to objects that have a presence and occupy space. Lowe's work occupies a chimerical arena between these two definitions; it marries aspects of one with the other. This coupling of two somewhat inimical areas stimulates a tense and unquiet embrace between forces. Her blurred boundaries between real and illusory form a semipermeable membrane that allows for the passage of conflicting philosophical speculations across its borders.

Constance Lowe's work is the condensation of fascinating arguments, beautiful skeins of intersecting logics that ponder the nature of realities

and, in the end, define the characteristics of the fantastic.

-Kathleen Whitney
contributing editor
Sculpture Magazine

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This publication is sponsored by the Widener Gallery, Department of Fine Arts, Trinity College and the University of Texas at San Antonio.