

PATRICIA L. BOYD
GOOD GRAMMAR

April 22 - June 24, 2018

Good Grammar moves, like peristalsis, between front and back-ends, depositing filth into the back of Potts' front—its URL. Drains are not only concerned with the matter that passes through, but with the action of flushing or moving it. Drains are *between*, providing transit from one place to another. In the video, *ATT2P4D394*, the out-valve, the destination, cannot be reached, due to an official boundary separating the plumbing at 2130 Valley Boulevard and the city's sewer.

Potts used to be a plumbing parts store. The building's drain starts on the roof, running through and intersecting the architecture roughly down the middle, between the gallery at the front and the somewhat murkier workshop, occupied by the landlords (musicians and founders of The Los Angeles Free Music Society), behind.

With something of surgical precision, the white walls in the gallery have been incised, by hand, to embed a lineup of ten sculptures—reliefs made from the armrest and lumbar support of an ergonomic office chair. The chair, a Herman Miller Aeron Chair, Size B, was bought in the liquidation auction of a Bay Area technology company. Cast in a mixture that contains used cooking grease, the negative space of these impressions recedes into the wall, behind the boundary usually demarcated for an exhibition.

The cooking grease is sourced from a facility that collects it from restaurants, cleans it of contaminants, and sells it to biodiesel refineries, where it is transformed into fuel. The grease in the casts has been extracted out of this recycling system before it has been cleaned and refined. In energetic terms, the grease here is spent and not yet replenished.

In the 1970s, the field of ergonomics developed despite Taylorist definitions of workers as adaptable machines that should be mechanically reprogrammed to increase productivity. With tilt tension and adjustable arm supports, today's ergonomic furniture sits somewhere between adapting to its user's body, and getting the user to change how they sit. As working conditions have become more flexible (i.e. precarious), the delicate tissues of bodies undergoing all sorts of social and economic fragmentations are supported and held in place in newly adaptable ways, increasing comfort and reducing injury, while postural (and psychic) 'defects' are re-formed.

Recently, I was employed by a friend in the UK to edit her volume of writings. When we chose an official style guide we settled on the one published by Oxford University. As well as being used for books published by the university press, the guide is used by students at Oxford—where I myself was 'programmed' about sixteen years ago. Oxford is a deeply elitist institution. I'm still trying to understand the violence of some of the symbolic meanings I internalised as a student there. As my friend's book took

form, as we carved into and re-worked its language, whittling it into punctuated units, I took note of the content of the guide's example sentences. The sentences were presented as simple vehicles for the explanation of correct and incorrect uses of each grammatical rule but they also spoke of a world in which certain things are assumed to be agreed upon: that it's desirable to be a good student; that kitchens are warm, homely places; that gender, though not entirely determinate, is not transmutable; that young people should grow up to feel pride in national identity, take pleasure in hard work, earn a living, avoid embarrassment. The world described is an ordered one, in which boundaries, positions, and (grammatical) rules are respected.

The works in this exhibition, and their distribution across different platforms, take up issues of waste management and wasted health, composition and decomposition. They ask this question: when we sit up straight, what is it we're trying to hold down? This is a sculptural problem, just as it is a social one.

PLB, 04/21/18

This exhibition received generous support from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant and Guest Haus Residency.



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