

Eli Kessler

Structural Deviation

MARCH 11 – APRIL 13, 2024

What is unique about your process and how does this define your practice?

As an artist, my practice involves finding relationships between making processes and techniques, materials, imagery, and forms. My artwork incorporates a range of processes that developed at various points in history. Old processes like wood carving exist in the same space as 3D printing and steel fabrication. For me, processes and materials contain latent content that, when thoughtfully utilized, reveal past ideologies. For instance, steel fabrication references industrial notions of progress, wood carving evokes a slower time and more direct interaction with nature, while 3D printing embodies our increasingly digitized existence. With that said, I am not solely interested in using processes in traditional ways but want to utilize processes and materials to actualize new possibilities. Within art, these new possibilities might manifest in new visual forms or new approaches to living.

What influences your work or your creative process?

Throughout my lifetime, art has given me agency—the agency to express a personal viewpoint and the ability to learn more about the world and larger social structures. With agency comes the possibility to move, freely express, and explore. As an artist, I value when art leads to creative liberation. For me, tapping into our exploratory nature, bravely collaborating, and ethically creating new possibilities drives my work.

What lessons have you learned from other artists?

Learning from other artists is absolutely important and one of the things I value most about art. I've learned from artists who were my teachers, peers in school, and artist friends. I've also learned from experiencing artwork made by living and past artists worldwide. From those experiences, I have realized that art is expanding with new possibilities. I view art as an open limitless space where creative impulses are realized. Some people might contribute to art by expanding traditional approaches, while others might create a whole new approach to art making. In some instances, art relies on traditional ideas of skill that require gaining competencies. Other times, art becomes a space for people to actualize new forms of creativity that are not tethered to disciplines or contrived boundaries. For example, a person with creative impulses associated with engineering might contribute to art by creating kinetic or robotic sculptures, or people with creative impulses to music may gravitate towards art because they have the freedom to make sound art that is not tied to traditional forms of music. With this mindset, art becomes completely inclusive, and anyone has the potential to contribute.



The Thorn, the Side, the Pleasure Principle, 2018, poplar, acrylic sheet, PLA plastic, cooling fan, glass block, plaster, apoxie clay, CRT TV, steel, cast plastic, computer tower, LCD monitor, aluminum