

HESSE FLATOW

Gordon Hall: END OF DAY

March 26 – April 24, 2021

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HESSE FLATOW is delighted to announce *END OF DAY*, a solo exhibition of sixteen sculptures by Gordon Hall to be presented across all three rooms of the gallery.



As an inanimate proxy for the type of worker whose name it shares, the clothes valet was designed to serve a very specific image of “man”: the type who wears a suit to his job at the stock exchange and, at the end of the day, returns home and takes off his shoes, placing them on the lower rung of his clothes valet; takes off his suit, and drapes it on the armature’s wooden shoulders; removes his watch, and hangs it from the object’s protruding metal prongs; and eats his supper and goes to bed until the next morning, when he dresses beside his clothes valet. While you may never have heard of or seen a clothes valet, this description of the labor of both the object and the working man might evoke a different kind of relationship, a digital or robotic assistant programmed to help the working man navigate his day and maintain his image. Both technologies follow a flawed system, anticipating a certain user and the set of needs dictated by their expected way of life.

Gordon Hall’s version of this oddly gendered furniture item is riddled with tiny nails, a laboriously achieved decorative feature that resembles reptilian skin, silvery and shifting in the sunlight. Here it stands, drained of use but suggestive of function, stiff but body-like, in the gallery. These tensions in the clothes valet point to a sense of animacy that threads through the enigmatic works in this exhibition, which shares the clothes valet’s title: *END OF DAY*. While most of the works hover on the edge of domestic function—a table, a chair, a bench, folded linens—they veer in unexpected directions. The leg of a table becomes the foot of a bird; the line on the floor becomes the seam of some jeans; a letter becomes a step; a symbol becomes a seat. Both recognizable and opaque, the works’ forms have been drawn from the world in a variety of ways, at times retaining the materiality of their sources while elsewhere being remade in pigmented cast concrete or resurfaced with graphite or colored pencil. A shim from a past work is repoured in solid brass, shifting from an unassuming object of support to a sliver of reflected light. These alterations in form and surface hint at imaginative potentials for use, conjuring altered relationships between objects and bodies.

But *END OF DAY* is not only concerned with the action or the echo; it also grapples with the *after*. After work, what other forms of labor are possible, or desirable? After memory, how do objects from our pasts return? After support, what other function could this object serve? After this object, what relations among bodies are possible? *After* is expansive; it is not an end but a cycle of iterations. *After* is also, of course, an homage: After Nauman, here is another approach to the backs of furniture, to the underside of a chair. After the Shakers, here is another approach to “craftsmanship as a form of prayer,” as Hall sees it.

The installation of *END OF DAY* also suggests a kind of after, perhaps after-hours, or the static, dreamy space of the afterlife. Just a few objects occupy each room, as if a meeting had been held and not everything had been put away, or as if someone were in the process of cleaning out an apartment. The generous distance between pieces reminds occupants that these objects are less furniture than sculptures. The most functional-seeming pieces rewrite their invitations for use and reintroduce themselves as abstracted and scrambled combinations of colors, textures, patterns, shapes, surfaces, and materials—relatives of the more elusive objects whose capacities remain unknown, or *not yet* knowable. Take the closed box: Nothing is more reticent, nor more full of possibilities.—Mira Dayal

VIEW ROOM

Circling the Square: Words from *END OF DAY*

April 10, 2021

Link to event view room:

<https://hesseflatow.com/viewing-room/44-gordon-hall/>

On the occasion of Hall's exhibition, sixteen artists, writers, curators, and friends of the artist were each invited to select one of the sixteen sculptures as a point of departure for writing from, to, with, or because of the objects in this exhibition. What do these sculptures propose? These texts were read aloud during the public online event "Circling the Square: Words from *END OF DAY*." The responses will also be compiled into a digital publication that will be available at hesseflatow.com.

Participants: Roya Amirsoleymani, Math Bass, Mira Dayal, Nicole Eisenman, Rami George, David J. Getsy, Danny Giles, Jason Hendrik Hansma, Corin Hewitt, Kahlil Robert Irving, Andrew Kachel, Katherine J. Lennard, Nancy Lupo, John Neff, sidony o'neal, X Zhu-Nowell.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Gordon Hall is an artist based in New York who makes sculptures and performances. Hall has had solo presentations at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, the Renaissance Society, EMPAC, and Temple Contemporary, and has been in group exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Hessel Museum, Art in General, White Columns, and Socrates Sculpture Park, among many other venues. Hall's writing and interviews have been published widely including in *Art Journal*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *Bomb*, as well as in Walker Art Center's Artist Op-Ed Series, *What About Power? Inquiries Into Contemporary Sculpture* (published by SculptureCenter), *Documents of Contemporary Art: Queer* (published by Whitechapel and MIT Press,) and *Theorizing Visual Studies* (Routledge). A volume of Hall's collected essays, interviews, and performance scripts was published by Portland Institute for Contemporary Art in 2019. Hall will be a 2022 resident faculty member at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.