

In 2017 I moved into a flat across the train line from Madeleine Minack's childhood home. To walk to our shared uni, I'd go through an underpass that came out at the end of her street. From the underpass our paths were the same, sometimes one of her siblings would nod at me as we passed each other, and, on a rare occasion, I'd bump into Minack.

Now, when Minack tells me about her wandering and collecting, I picture her on this street. I am a passing observer on my way to a class or train, and she is mid stoop to pick up something that fell out of a pocket or pulled off a packet.

Minack collects objects in her own pockets and, eventually, they make it to the studio where they're paired into a family unit. A button and a piece of wire meet with a bit of soft pink jewellery wax to bind. The binding material becomes its own entity, a thread creating a spiral pattern or a piece of blu tack imprinted with a fingerprint.

Minack's studio is a precarious mix of messy and neat. The delicate assemblages seem ready to fall apart and join their unassembled companions around the place. The objects come together for Minack and create a purpose and meaning for herself. She sits in her studio configuring and reconfiguring. They are each a fragile moment made of a collection of moments of gleaning, a term she borrows from Agnes Vardar's documentary 'The Gleaners' (2000). They are the sparkle in her eye as she spots something along her journey to work, class, or home. These mark her life like points on a map and create meaning out of place, time and space. The 'found-hood' of the objects gives them meaning, and their assembled family provide them with a home.

Minack gives these 'creatures' a purpose, and in turn, they give her a purpose in her practice. Their relationship is reciprocal. The artist makes art and shows it to other people in order to convey a lost point of view.

Let me introduce you to them:

Our first friend is slight – two objects linked by a fine piece of thread. A grey moth's body is pinned to the wall and tied in a harness-like pattern with a thin thread. The thread is pulled down by a small piece of something, unrecognisable out of context. It's white and hard and something between plastic and rock. This creature hangs in a tension of gravity, the slightest touch would turn it into a pendulum, but you wouldn't dare let the delicate wings tear.

On the opposite wall, a perfect couple curves towards each other. A wire in an exaggerated J curve reaches its hand in offering to its companion. On the end is a pink fragment with a yellow highlight, the offering. The J is a question, the question mark curve, hesitant, as it checks out its mate. The mate is coy but mimics in a similar pink blush. It is a flesh-coloured glob of plasticine holding a shard of wax that cradles a white fragment of something shell-like. It holds its offering away, like a bunch of roses behind its back, a small fishing line that's caught a tiny piece of a pink balloon.

The greying, plastic floss handle curves out like a sword from a wax body with a small, white acrylic paint head. A piece of yellowed tape clings to a string, still grasping a hair from when it was collected. A chunk of sponge cradles something blue, and smallest of all, the forlorn head of a bent pin wraps itself in a blu tack blanket, a small blue tail poking out the bottom.

Each entity is installed at eye height in a line around the room which encourages the side-stepping and individual attention of a traditional gallery hang. People shuffle around the room and awkwardly sidestep each other like the collision of two people perusing a clothing rack in a shop from different directions. A few are hidden in a cavity at the base of the wall, not quite ready to come out yet.

Through attention and presentation, the object takes on an individuality that challenges the human urge to think of ourselves as hierarchically superior to objects. They have a personality that, like a portrait, makes you wonder what their life has been before this moment. The sculptures are made with pictorial composition in mind and are constructed in a balance of necessity and composition. They hold their own in a balance of thick and thin whilst bouncing off each other in a harmonious sequence. Small and delicate is next to long and slender, offset by small and stocky.

These materials have stuck around (out of the dirt or the side of a footpath) because they don't quickly degrade. These are markers of our overconsumption, of our unconscious collective hoarding of matter that doesn't always make it to landfill, or makes it back to us out of a tip. We revelled in their newness at some point, and now we cast them out with disdain. They look back with the aloof knowledge of their longevity, they will still be here after the gallery patrons have degraded, bone and flesh. They creep from the street corners and into the gallery and idly wait to join a new pile, find a new home, a heap that will continue to grow. Are these our forgotten friends or foes?

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