

Becky Beasley: Lake Erie from the Northwest

by Tim Barnes

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From whichever angle you look at it, Becky Beasley's solo exhibition isolates the viewer. Each artwork, whether sculptural, image-based or video, seems deeply personalised to a degree unfathomable to onlookers. These artworks, however, seem to bolster the significance of one another, throwing references around the room. Visitors may find themselves caught within a web of interrelated words and images.

Beasley is happy for visitors to wonder disorientated and make casual connections both visually and conceptually in this multilayered exhibition. This is an environment that has been

assembled in such a way that it seems to contain active thought. Ideas appear suspended in motion where memory and sentiment intervene with intellectual endeavours.

'The Left Door / La Dernière Porte' from Beasley's 'Athens Archive' depicts an abandoned shopfront. The photograph taken in 2004 has been later reversed in the printing process so that it appears one would have to open this door with a left hand. This is the first artwork viewers will encounter in the exhibition. We enter through this door giving the distinct impression that we are stepping into Beasley's own awkward never-never land.

'Literary Green' is another earlier piece made in 2009. A large photograph depicts a mysterious interior coupled with a glass table-like sculptural element, the shape of which echoes its two-dimensional counterpart. These earlier artworks feel like monuments or milestones along Beasley's creative path. Suggesting that to remember something is a creative act in itself, over time, Beasley is developing a practice that enjoys seeing older artworks operating in new, fresh contexts.

The video piece, 'A Man Restored a Broken Work', shows two hands repairing a delicate wooden box. Separate component parts are gradually glued together to form both the box and its lid. The same box appears again in 'Build Night I & II', a pair of photographs showing the dissected box in all its pieces. These artworks seem to counteract each other and share an interesting symbiosis.

Various references ricochet back and forth around the gallery but rarely escape into any wider cultural context. Each artwork induces an explosion of further questioning as the relationship between image and object deepens. Beasley's material perhaps lies within a subjective or sentimental territory of thought that is sometimes given to objects as we experience them alongside the circumstances of our lives. It's personal and, like walking into a hall of mirrors, one is made acutely aware of an impression of themselves intruding into this complex, theatrical thought-scape. Viewers are not being asked to draw conclusions but instead are allowed to continually narrate and produce meanings, perhaps entering a participatory, conversational exchange with the artist.