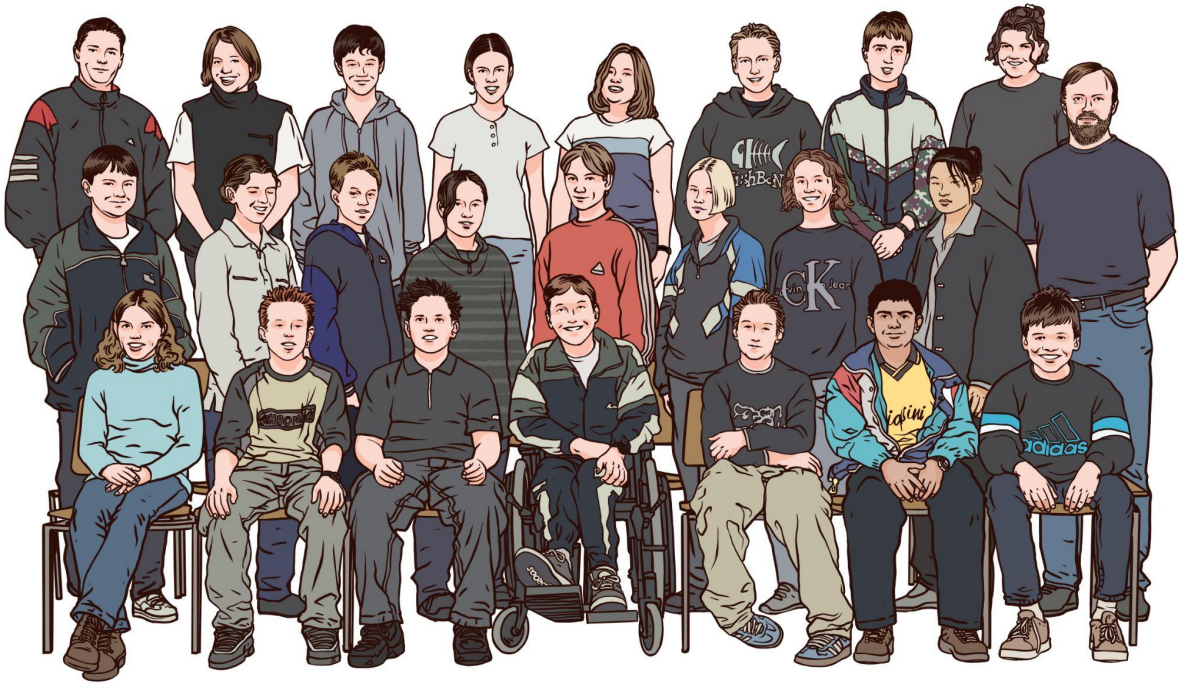


Independent

2020

C.C.C.



Looking at the world as if seeing it for the first time can be difficult. The sculptures on display in this show, titled *Independent*, is my attempt at re-seeing the tools for what have been facilitating my interests, physically and mentally, since the turn of the millennium.

When I was younger it felt like the culture of skateboarding was moving outwards into the aesthetically unknown. Today the culture seems to move inwards, appropriating from the skateboard-past, constantly multiplying the arsenal of self-references. As the athletic standards of the sport are continuously peaking, the aesthetic tendencies seem to be stuck in an increasingly tightening loop. The industry's re-introduction of board shapes from the '80s and early '90s does, for instance, feel like a tendency governed by nostalgia rather than by a wish to enhance the performative aspects.

I think about this nostalgia in relation to the term "core skateboarding" which is casually used among skaters as a label of authenticity. Usually "core skateboarding" is understood in opposition to the idea of "corporate skateboarding". Held against each other the two terms are technical predicates differentiating between 'skater-owned' and 'non-skater-owned' skateboard companies. This distinction makes sense for a culture that once saw itself as being for skateboarders by skateboarders. It's then ironic how these outsider corporations

seem to be dominating an industry that all together is reminiscent of time from before they had an influence. In some cases, these corporations do seem to be understanding the desire for authenticity better than most of the authentic, 'skater-owned' companies.

Nostalgia for skateboarding could be a reaction spawning from a subcultural logic. A reaction securing exclusivity for the truly invested, who can recite from skateboard history intuitively and thus differentiate themselves from the "non-core". At this point, it doesn't seem to be the case. Nostalgia in skateboarding feels more related to the mechanisms in everything else contemporarily nostalgic or retrogressive. However, underneath, there seems to be a pursuit of "core" in the act of modern skateboarding, that reach beyond the aesthetic time travel. Underneath the reviving of skateboard-past, it looks as if skateboarding has come to a new level of self-awareness, almost as if trying to find its own modernism.

Ad Reinhardt's drawing from 1946, depicting a painting talking back at the spectator, pedagogically sums up the desire for an artwork not to be a representation of something but a thing in oneself - a fundamental acknowledgement within modernism and forwards. In the first frame of this drawing the spectator points to the abstract painting asking what it represents. In the frame below, the painting points to the spectator asking back, what he represents. Ad Reinhardt further explains: "It (the painting) is alive if you (the spectator) are. It represents something and so do you. YOU, SIR, ARE A SPACE, TOO."

In the conclusive pursuit of "core", as I see it, skateboarding just wants to be something taking up space, orbiting collective consciousness amongst other insignificant debris. In a situation where skateboarding is happening, the act itself wants to be indistinguishable from the surrounding cityscape. The trash can on the pavement holds as much meaning as jumping over it does. Skateboarding, however, requires an onlooker to register the skating as part of this insignificant cluster of things that take up space. The onlooker could be everyone, but given the indispensable nature of this everyone (as in Reinhardt's example), the onlooker is foremost an imagined everyone, through whom skateboarding can look at itself.

Contemporary trends in the video-capturing of street skating could be symptoms of this imagined onlooker. For a long time skate film has primarily been shot through a fisheye lens which is held by a filmer, following the skater in focus around on a skateboard. The fisheye lens adds to the dramatic effect of skateboarding, making the obstacles look higher and the skater skate faster - an overall optic extension of the moving body and landscape. As smartphone technology became common property around the late '00s, alongside the deployment of internet platforms, the production of skateboard footage started to elude the old distribution formats. These were the videos produced by video magazines and skateboard-gear-manufacturers. Some of the answers to why the amount of fisheye-lens-footage has diminished in all of today's skateboard footage probably lies in the proliferation of camera phones. Meanwhile, this change in technology meets criteria for a "core-mindset". Firstly, the reduction of physical video gear is a development towards a more minimalistic scenario. On a visual level, so is the stripping away of dramatic effect by replacing a restless fisheye lens with a steady long-lens. The dramatic effect is furthermore clouding the thing itself, a proximity to storytelling and potential meaning. Thirdly, the steady

long-lens footage meets the desire to see the act of skateboarding as from a random onlookers perspective.

Looking at skateboard footage today there seems to be a cultivation of a more out-of-control style of skating than before. Rather than going slower to perfect technical manoeuvres within a confined trick-vocabulary, skaters seem to be wanting to go faster while allowing rougher executions. This development too is perhaps part of an overall desire for breaking free of representational systems and become "core". The representational system here being the binary language labelling manoeuvres that to a random onlooker is nonexistent. Rather than seeing tricks the onlooker sees materials moving and touching, bodies united and separated from wooden toys under the momentary suspension of gravity.

I rarely use pencils. Most of my drawings are made by hands other than my own, often on a computer and often by the hands of my very talented brother. Watching him work today with his back bent over the screen makes me think of how he was hired by an advertising bureau in the late '90s shortly after moving to the capital. I think about how drawing on paper in the business of illustrating was steadily replaced by digital technology as his career moved forward.

Occasionally I see his drawings on storefronts or bus-stop signs around the city. It's hard to say exactly how I can tell that it's his drawings. I think it has to do with the way he draws the human body. My brother grew up reading superhero comics and through that learned to draw the human body in very dynamic situations. I suspect that this coming alive of the body, frozen in mid-air and in-between buildings, has shaped his entire craft. The choreographing of the human body, as well as the choreographing of the dynamic comic book page, is rooted deep within his sense of composing a picture. When I ask my brother to draw a human figure with no further stylistic instructions, I always sense the remnants of super-humans around their bodies and faces.

For this show I wanted my brother to trace a class photo from when I was in the ninth grade. Retrieving this photo I had to pay a visit to my hometown. In primary school I remember the graduating classes framed side by side in the hallways, knowing that I eventually would join this tapestry. My brother is in there too. From time to time I would find his graduating picture from 1990/91 and look at his skater fashion; his long hair, the brown denim shorts, the Airwalk shoes and his New Deal t-shirt.

I hadn't been inside the school buildings since I graduated. I have been in the schoolyard many times since, however, noticing that skate-obstacles now are an integrated part of play-area-designs, probably meant for anything that can roll on the ground; skateboards as well scooters, bikes etc. A lot of time has passed since my brother and his friends got together and assembled a skatepark here out of pallets and lain off wood from the local builders' merchant. The scrap wood seemed foreign to the asphalt then. Today, freestyle action sports have seeped into the very concrete that children walk by every morning before class.

After a visit to the principal's secretary's office, I was pointed in the direction of the graduation classes from year 99/2000. I found my class, took a photo with my phone and

had a brief chat with the janitor who walked up behind me. I recognised him as one of the local football heroes from when I was younger. He gave me an update on the ones of my classmates who still lived in town. I told him why I was taking a photo of my class. I told him that I wanted to draw it, not that I wanted my brother to draw it. He said that I should be careful with not making it too realistic since it could be a violation of the included persons. I explained to him that I planned to make an abstract drawing of the class photo.

In this photo, the fourteen-year-old me is making a discrete devil's horns with my right hand. Unlike Bertel Thorvaldsen, the Danish sculptor who in 1841 made the same hand gesture when he had his photo taken, mine had nothing to do with superstition. Mine was part of a series of attitudinal gestures at the time, another one of which was clinking the chalice of wine with a fellow confirmand before the altar. I told my brother to take the devils horns out of the drawing and have my hands do something else instead.

Independent, 2020, C.C.C.
Installation view





Independent, 2020, C.C.C. Installation view



Independent, 2020, C.C.C. Installation view



Independent, 2020, C.C.C.

Untitled (Orange Boards # 1), 2020. Shelving system, wheels, bearings, trucks, bolts, powder-coated skateboards. 80 × 200 cm



Independent, 2020, C.C.C. Installation view



Independent, 2020, C.C.C. Installation view



Untitled (Pencils # 2), 2020. Pencil set case, pencils, woodless graphite pencil. 11 × 22 cm



Untitled (Pencils # 3), 2020. Pencil set case, pencils. woodless graphite pencils, charcoal pencils. 11 × 23 cm



Untitled (Pencils # 1), 2020. Pencil set case, pencils. 11 × 19 cm



Independent, 2020, C.C.C. Installation view



Independent, 2020, C.C.C.

Untitled (Orange Board), 2020. Shelving system, wheels, bearings, trucks, bolts, powder-coated skateboard. 80 × 50 cm



Independent, 2020, C.C.C.
Detail