



Bill Walton, *Upside Down Pail (#2)*, n.d., wood, lead, paint, paper cup, 5 x 10 1/4 x 2 inches, BW 1052

Bill Walton: Material Gestures

June 11–August 13, 2021

Material Gestures is Bill Walton's (1931–2010, worked in Philadelphia) second solo exhibition at Fleisher/Ollman. Walton's sculptural process is defined by the manner in which wood and metal are stacked on top of each other; linen is folded into forms frozen by paint; and objects are tooled and shaped from various metals like copper, aluminum, lead, and brass. His objects are at once simple and complex, as Walton had an uncanny ability to unite disparate materials into elegantly poetic statements. Bringing together the austerity of Minimalism with a respect for handmade precision, many of his works may trick viewers into believing that what lies before them are found objects, rather than the rigorously crafted sculptures that belie their subtlety. Exploring Walton's predilection for synthesizing different elements, a group of small sculptures composed of hooked glass rods nested within metal wrenches are presented on a table in the center of the gallery. Following the theme of the small sculptural gesture, viewers will be treated to works that unite unexpected materials like lead and soap; and copper, electrical tape, and paper.

Walton did not believe in dating his art, not out of a desire to obscure chronology, but because he knew he might go back to certain "completed" works with a different approach over the span of several years. His tinkering allowed him a continuum and flux that suited his core beliefs about his art: that objects constructed from vintage parts (a dead tree limb, a salvaged floor board, or piece of metal) could be readjusted in tandem with a view of the constantly shifting world around us.

Walton briefly studied art at the Institute of Design in Chicago, but was essentially self-taught. His career was centered in Philadelphia, where he worked as a commercial printer and taught printmaking at Moore College of Art and Design. His work has been exhibited at institutions such as the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania. Recent solo gallery presentations include Frith Street Gallery, London, U.K.; and JTT and James Fuentes, New York, NY (across both venues). His work is included in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Yale University Gallery, and Wellesley College.

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