

Anton Lieberman

Text by Ruba Katrib

*For the inventor at Concours Lépine, the creation of a solar-powered boiled-egg opener or some other equally dotty gadget is merely an excuse for obsessive manipulation and contemplation. Like all obsession, moreover, this particular variety has its poetic side, as manifested to a greater or lesser degree in Picabia's machines, in Tinguely's mechanical constructions, in the simple clockwork of a discarded watch, or in any object whose original use we simply cannot remember but whose mechanism still arouses a sort of delighted fascination in us. Something that serves no purpose whatsoever may in this sense still serve us. (Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, 1996)*

Largely ignoring assumptions governing the fields of science and nature, Anton Lieberman creates objects and experiences that are rethought and retooled. Using low-fi techniques, Lieberman's works alternate between falling flat and becoming animated. They can dazzle for a moment, then appear crudely simple the next. This gap is precisely the crux, the space where our expectation, desire, and empirical knowledge becomes confused.

Strange observations permeate Lieberman's works; objects and images appear as artifacts, or instructionally didactic, but the lesson evades us. Stone shapes seem to conform to a particular logic or language, but highlight the fractured and decontextualized relics and remnants that can only allude to an absence of information. Their titles suggest that they are blown up particles of dust, sand, and lint, materials that are distinct, but conflated when enlarged. As forms, they resemble interpretive keys to an invisible realm of the present, an unknown past and potential future. Although, what exactly they communicate is obscured.

In many sculptures, unlikely materials come together, neon tubes fill a hollowed log and white vine-like structures hold an egg at each end. In a wall work, comprised of a green board, the illusion of holes appears, but then they are revealed as artifice. We are implicated as viewers, by filling in the blanks, seeing what we wish to see, and overlooking the rest—a metaphor for the construction of fields of knowledge. Lieberman manipulates a general understanding of objects, nature, and science, creating works that suggest functionality, while simultaneously intriguing and confounding.