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## Review: Things to be Next To / Three Walls

By Regan Golden-McNerney

Whether an artwork is dazzling or alienating, spectators keep a certain distance and rarely visit a gallery simply to be *close* to art. Nonetheless, “Things To Be Next To” at Three Walls accurately describes the experience of this exhibition, which imparts a feeling of closeness through ordinary materials and simple installation. The show includes sculptures and photographs by Alberto Aguilar and Peter Fagundo from Chicago, as well as Warren Rosser and James Woodfill from Kansas City. From Fagundo’s stretched electric blanket to Aguilar’s stack of old books, the artwork is culled from the things that pile in garages and fill basements. Aguilar’s simple gesture of stacking and photographing these objects and Fagundo’s poetic titles like “she lays under the sun, i lay under the moon,” make these objects appear cared for and valued, even having outlived their usefulness. And a narrative emerges, about a family, from these random stacks of broken furniture and discarded toys: children are grown, a chair goes unused, and a cat balances atop half-unpacked boxes.

This exhibition is about the value of the familiar objects that fill our homes, but more importantly, about how those object are transformed, or alternately fail to be transformed, once placed in a gallery. The textures of the objects, from worn cloth to nubby carpet, keep the work from becoming too polished in the white cube or, on the other extreme, as appearing too saccharin like a smattering of knick-knacks at odds with the orderly gallery. There is a bluntness to the presentation of these works, as Aguilar’s pieces lean against the wall and Rosser’s colorful carpeted forms unfold on the floor, that allows



Alberto Aguilar

the work to hover somewhere between the ordinary and the extraordinary. One exception is James Woodfill's installation in the second gallery, which is truly transcendent, and where common construction materials and florescent lighting are transformed through light and sound into an immersive, otherworldly space. Woodfill's work, in this respect, contrasts the other artists' works, but also affirms their familiarity. As a whole, the focus of this show on domesticity, as well as ordinary materials and no frills presentation upends expectations for art in a gallery as something to feel close to.

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