



coleen sterritt
stuck to the world

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Riverside Art Museum

May 4- July 2, 2006

It is what humans do. And it is these stuttering, inchoate shifts of matter that signal the intelligence of her work. Her working process is triggered by consequences – if this, then this, then this. Quality becomes a moral quest to articulate only the inevitable, and what is conjured by need rather than the civilities of taste. The organizational level of her work resists totalizing forms and single signs. It splinters into fragments, pluralities, creating crossing points and webs of open structures tolerant of disorder with themselves.

With *Domestic Fairytale* and *Pinecone Stack* Sterritt seems to daydream with objects, characteristically incorporating found materials as prominent formal elements. This harvesting from the world – the pinecones, the scratched and lacquered tables, the birch, and blocks of wood – estranges the material from their normative contexts yet resonates with associations to social reality. This sticking to the world is also evidence of Sterritt's desire to understand the physical, and to sort insight into language. The hyperaccumulation of blocks of wood becomes



Domestic Fairytale, 2005, detail

an intense sequence of reality that in the search for meaning opens up a path. But both *Domestic Fairytale* and *Pinecone Stack* resist summation in flight to non-sequiturs and expansion. Drawing no conclusion, this work posits questions. And questions have a longer life than answers.

It is important to note that form *is* Sterritt's work. Form is in everything. No thought, activity, or thing can exist outside of it. Sterritt crafts gesture out of cadences of balance and imbalance and finds a natural persuasiveness in formal hybrids of the organic and machined. Careful attention is given to the joints in her work. How one element is articulated, or embedded, or sprouted from another is critical to the work's sense of authenticity and the integrity of its facture.

Central to all of Sterritt's work is the permission of one process, such as grafting, or fitting, or stacking to give form to its own will. This permissiveness signifies Sterritt's confidence as an artist. And the orchestration of sequences, mostly additive, skeletal, jointed and skinned is evidence of her presence. In her drawings she exploits a finely calibrated sense of touch. The drawings are tangential to

the sculpture and often implicate abstracted meditations on the body as oozing, as skeletal, as plant like, while always remaining contemplative studies of form.

Coleen Sterritt's work underwrites her interest in the familiar and the mysterious. It is work of ache and rapture and enchantment, unlocking concealed desire. This work is divined from internal pressure, chance and urgency - it's work conjured by a witch.



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Julia Couzens is an artist who lives and works on
Merritt Island, Clarksburg, California.

Front Cover
Daddy-O, detail, 2006
83" x 38" x 40"
wood, glue, insulation foam, cork,
paint, shellac, found furniture

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