



MOBILE DEVICE

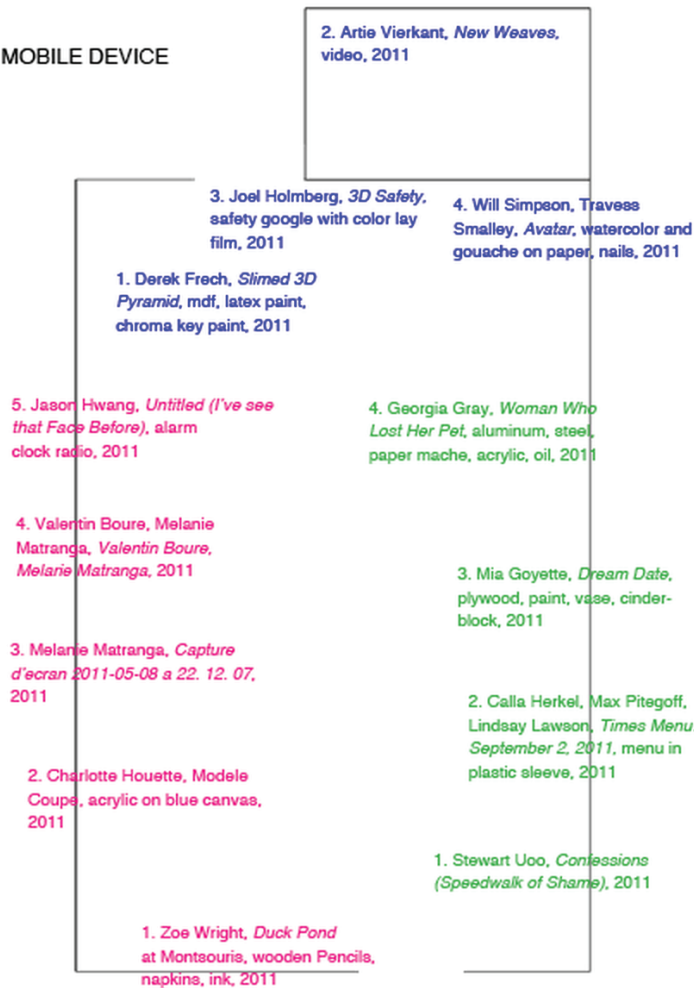


IMAGE: Courtesy of the gallery

Mobile Device Floor Plan

etc.

For example, in one game Derek Frech initially offers a G.I. Joe proportioned pyramid featuring painted graphic slime oozing from the precipice down its faces. Seeing this, Artie Vierkant creates a seizure inducing hypno-action video which is then interpreted by Joel Holmberg in *3D Safety* (literally 3D (safety) glasses). Ending the game are Will Simpson and Travess Smalley's collaborative red and blue trapper keeper squiggles on paper. (Nailed upside down and named *Avatar*? I think they are talking about western religion, here.)

## Mobile Device at Bodega

By MATT KALASKY

Posted: 9/11/11

The objects and images on display in *Mobile Device*, seem to be just, like, hanging out. Lounging in Bodega's white walled parlor; they wait for an articulate re-posturing—the deft hand of curation—someone to put them in tune with each other. The awkwardness is palpable as the works within interact on the level of teenage Roombas. Softly, blindly, silently bumping, rubbing, grinding. For my money, *Mobile Device* is a small tragicomedy on communication and that drama, not the work, steals the show.

From the press release:

*In February of this year, Bodega asked three artists to make a work and share it with an artist of their choosing. We asked each of these three new artists to make a work in relation to the one they were shown and then choose another person to share their work with. The process continued through the summer and culminates in a show of works from 16 artists, on view from September 2 until October 2.*

This basically plays out in the gallery as three separate games of art telephone. Each “line” or “game” group wraps, in sequential order, around the periphery of the space. Think of giant snakes that have distinctly consumed a bowling ball, a stop sign, a human, an irregular polygon, a telephone booth,

In a real game of Chinese Whispers, we would remark on the dissimilarities between the first work and the last; the giggle inducing misfires, mutations, and relocations that this process has bred. “Meet me at the movie theatre at seven,” becomes “Marmalade my toes Sammy boy?” And this is partially true of the show. Seeing Frech’s sculpture transmorph into Avatar does produce a quick charm. But this pleasure is fleeting because, as before, one is still left with a room full of art pieces that don’t seem to be doing much with each other. At most they are looking directly in front and behind for a clue. They are isolated. They are deflated. But why?

In the children’s game the secret message is inconsequential. Any phrase or utterance that can be translated will do. In a similar way, the art in *Mobile Device* is removed of character; essentially enlisted to serve the mechanics of the curatorial game. I could undoubtedly see many of the pieces working within the contexts of other exhibitions but here the game overshadows and the work underplays.

But, there is one last correlation between the game telephone and the game *Mobile Device*, that deserves attention. Do we remember what happened after the game was finished? When “Marmalade my toes Sammy boy?” yielded the floor? This was the time when we learned that this game (like all games) could teach us something about the real world. As children we discovered the imaginary telephone line was actually a controlled deconstruction of the very real gossip grapevine. But instead of learning why second hand elementary school information is unreliable, mobile devices reveals how second hand art is healthy and ubiquitous. Artists are always, ALWAYS, stealing, borrowing, adapting, appropriating, and inverting information from each other. It is a free-flowing circuitry that generates the chance and beauty that most artists seek. But our culture of borrowing runs so deep and effuse that it sometimes blurs at the tip of our nose. Bodega’s triumph here is a simple and fine exposition on artistic exchange delivered through playful game. And the commitment to this agenda never wavers. The work could have definitely been commingled for aesthetic presentation. There could have been curatorial editing. But the telephone lines are maintained and it would be my guess that Bodega is showing work that Bodega doesn’t care for. But when you play a game there are always risks and rewards. Go see *Mobile Device* and maybe you’ll agree: It’s bad and that’s the best part about it.

***Mobile Device***

*Bodega*

[www.bodegaphiladelphia.org](http://www.bodegaphiladelphia.org)

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On view through October 2nd, 2011