

Elizabeth Orr *Loss Lead*

Bodega, New York 4 April – 3 May

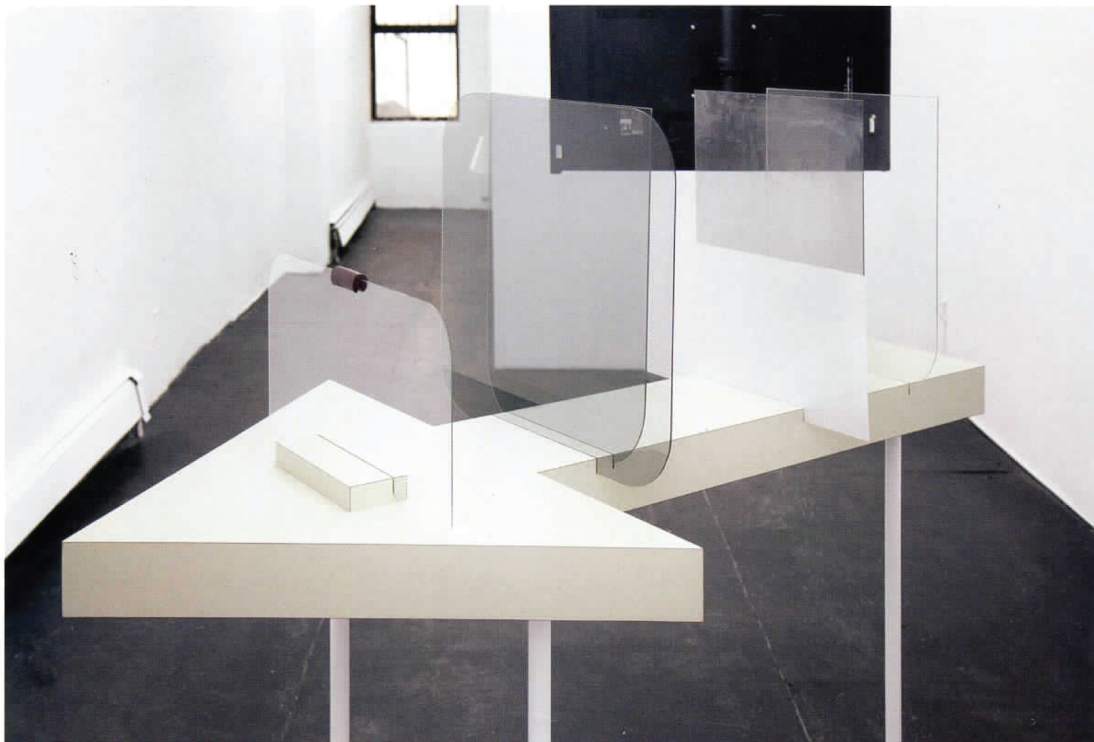
Elizabeth Orr's *Loss Lead* is named after a seemingly counterintuitive marketing strategy that reduces the price – and profitability – of one item to spur sales of another. Bananas at a grocery store are one example; they're usually priced below cost and placed far from an entrance, with the hope that customers will be lured deep into the store and enticed to buy other, surrounding things. Live shows at a casino are another. They're usually unprofitable, though they offer patrons the opportunity to gamble before and after the show, which is when real money is made.

Is there, then, a loss lead of *Loss Lead*? Perhaps it's the strawberry yogurt, which coats a glass pane forming part of the installation *Projected Return* (all works 2015), a big, ridiculous, arrow-shaped tabletop pointing to nowhere but the wall. (Apparently in Sweden they actually frost glass with yogurt.) In *Projected Return*, the yogurt

looks like it was factory-made, not applied directly by Orr. But really, this is beside the point. Loss lead is used here as a crutch to parody corporate marketing strategies and their administrative aesthetics. The arrow is one example. It's inset with different-sized glass panes that look like the kind that separate sad, queuing masses from bank tellers, or the angled glass of presidential teleprompters. The arrow also makes an appearance as a misbehaving cartoon character in the video *Gaussian Catharsis*. It floats back and forth across the screen taunting the work's frustrated human protagonist, who squares off with it on a sidewalk in Albany, New York.

The pleasure of *Loss Lead* is the way Orr makes an abstract muck of her references. *Ghost Posture* is simply a tall piece of bronze glass, inset into a Formica base that could be a cross between a pig trough and a cheap upside-down desk.

In the video *Loss Lead*, the term is defined with jargon about 'strategic meditation in the workplace' and 'predicted future returns'. The video is set in a high-floor conference room in the *New York Times's* Manhattan headquarters. The camera lingers lovingly on a Poland Spring water bottle, pans over sleek if generically contemporary office furniture and keenly makes one aware that it's high over the city, not down in its streets. This elitist separatism is reinforced choreographically in one of the video's best sequences: the three actors in *Loss Lead* all turn at once to walk towards the room's floor-to-ceiling glass windows, like modern-day flaneurs taking in the city from their privileged positions high, high above it. It's these stylistic overtures to class that make *Loss Lead* interesting. I wish there were more of them. In Orr's hands, they're especially canny. *David Everitt Howe*



Projected Return, 2015, glass, Formica, flavoured yogurt, foam, steel,
36 × 72 × 12 cm. Courtesy Bodega, New York