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Incompleteness

Christopher Andrew Freund
Bard College

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Incompleteness

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Arts
of Bard College

by

Chris Freund

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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“Incompleteness” is a series of photographs of sculptural tableaux constructed for the camera and lit with a flashlight for long exposures. I use largely cheap materials and intend for their rough particularities be made evident. I have found that this lighting technique allows me the greatest control possible over how light renders the constructed objects.

The title of the project is derived from Gödel’s incompleteness theorems. The first of these states that any logical system (sufficiently complex to perform arithmetic in) cannot be both *consistent* (i.e. does not contradict itself) and *complete* (i.e. no statement cannot be proved within the system). The second, and more critical to the work, states that for any consistent system, the proof for its consistence must exist outside of the system itself. I find these facts spellbindingly beautiful, and have co-opted some of their terminology to refer to my process (albeit stripped of its noble mathematical rigor).

For one of my tableaux to come into being, it is required for some force to comment from the outside on the surfaces presented to the camera; I do not see them as sculptures nor artworks in and of themselves. I see light as the “comment” on the “system” of the sculpture (i.e. its spatial arrangement and surfaces) that brings the until-then unrelated assembled objects that exist in three-dimensional blackness to a plane wherein formal and tonal relationships may play out. The forms do not exist until pierced by the flashlight outside of the frame and forced into a structure with one another. For this reason, it is of great importance to me that the direction of the light and its origin be hinted at in each image: I want the viewer to trace the effect of the light as it traipses in and out of the space.

The smaller prints are images I constructed from the scraps, tests, and detritus of the larger builds much faster and in a more offhand fashion. What arose from these images are hints at forms, techniques and materials used in the full-size tableaux, as well as some intentional red herrings and obfuscations.

The images are presented without glass so that the viewer may directly interface with the surface of the print and enter it as if it were a window, without a pesky reflective middleman, and fixed to the surface of the wall to make the prints appear to recede into it. Ultimately my goal is simply to create beautiful, resonant images to enter.































