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"Can you shut the door behind you?"

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"Can you shut the door behind you?" creates a parallel between the basement and the subconscious. These settings (one mental and one physical) serve as storage units. In creating these spaces, I became fascinated with the container as a sculptural form; objects whose purpose is to carry and cradle other objects. Pipes cycling water throughout the home, crates and boxes holding family memorabilia, washing machines continuously cycling dirty laundry. My work captures how these containers, abandoned in this forgotten space, grow and decay. The entire space is in and of itself a constructed container a viewer may enter. Casting is an integral method in the production of my work and allows me to illustrate the function of the container. Rather than fabricating my own molds, I pour or paint material onto found objects. The found objects become the molds themselves. This process captures the vacant, forgotten spaces within them. "Can you shut the door behind you?" halts the cyclical functions of the basement and of the subconscious. It allows one to examine the mechanism as a whole. In this process, I began to question to function of the basement. Although it is a space used to store and archive, its organization is rooted in chaos; it is space for things we want to keep, but can't look at. It possesses a facade of order. It contains a history of detritus. It is constantly expanding, contracting, and shifting below our feet. Like the subconscious, this space is both logical and illogical, constructed and organic, stable and fragile. It presents comforting and familiar forms, but works within an unfamiliar system; outlets and pipes made out of plaster leading to an unknown place, the underside of a bath with no floor to hold it up, and rubber crates too weak to support themselves. These sculptures compose this complex system, yet they are also the reasons it is decaying.

Nate Millstein, 2018









