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Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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## When Angel Met Pinocchio

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When Angel Met Pinocchio



A Senior Project Submitted to the Division of the Arts  
of  
Bard College  
by Bea Tabacchi

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*When Angel Met Pinocchio* considers the gendered stories of objects "coming to life" and the possibilities in the "after life" of these objects as subjects. Pygmalion was a Cypriot sculptor who had no interest in women until he carved a woman out of ivory, and she was so beautiful that his love for her figure animated her into a real person. The transformative quality of Pygmalion's desires onto objects is rooted in creating containers for imagining an ideal female figure, and also projecting "life" onto his own work. Pinocchio's story on the other hand, is about the "boyish" figure determined to access livelihood. I use Pinocchio as a poetic container for discussing the issue of object fetishism. On the other hand, I use the character of "Angel" to propose an afterlife to object fetishism, and ulterior ways of "possessing" materials. Angel has no literary roots or strict origin-story, so she becomes synonymous with the act of re-purposing.

There was almost no paint in my studio when I began this project, so I started using red and white slip, unfired clay. Using slip for drawing and painting made me consider more my own hand and body, but also pushed two-dimensional lines and planes into an inherently more complicated zone of being material. Slip is more temporary and temperamental than paint. It responds to temperature, water, and it absorbs other material particles besides itself. Slip has a quality that acts as "neutral," as in it is more akin to the muted tones of a frame, of a wood, or of a skin. It is a connector. Slip directs viewers from ground to sculpture to painting to drawing to vignette.

The ability to literally enter a frame, as a viewer coming in from the periphery, and to bring life to art as well as "after life," i.e. re-purpose, was one of the goals for this project. In brief, it was an experiment in "slipping" between drawing and three dimensions, playing with malleabilities in form and pictorial assemblage to create a space of many different scales and intimacies. Hierarchy between materials, and juxtaposition between "subjects" and "form" are rendered useless and futile measures. The only possible way to read this space, visually or literally, is to experience it and assemble it as an interlocutor.