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Midnight Cowboy Rides Again

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Midnight Cowboy Rides Again

by Ilana Dodelson

This body of work contains things which are uncomfortable in their own skin, stretching out their membranes until the boundaries of what they are and what they are not become blurred. A painting which is only pretending to be a painting. Or an object which is resolutely nameable, yet the meaning of that name is lost. By mixing and distorting different visual languages, I hope to divorce each mark from its symbolic meaning and force it to activate in an unexpected way. The composite of all of these opposing visual languages is a painting that refuses to act as one unified form and yet insists on being read as a painting nonetheless. In this way, I reclaim the language of formalism as neutral ground with which to create subversively informal, illogical, and strange work.

These same themes of forced illogicality and dislocation of meaning also appear in my installation. I filled the room with familiar objects and focused on manipulating our sense of security in interacting with these objects. I'm interested in finding the point where an object is unhinged just enough so that we no longer know where we stand in relation to it, and yet not so much that the object simply takes on an abstract form. The cauliflower in my installation remains cauliflower, but the meaning of that identity is convoluted and indiscernible.

I would like to thank: my family for supporting me in every way, my friends for countless conversations about art, Joe, Judy, Medrie, Lothar, Marco, Roman, and all my other teachers for teaching me so much and helping me through every failure over the last four years. Thank you Laura for your always honest feedback, and for guiding me through the many different stages my work has gone through since freshman year.

Most of all I want to thank my cousin Danielle Bessler for all the time we spent together. My memories of her have been, and will continue to be, an inspiration and source of comfort both in and out of the studio. This project is dedicated to her.







