
Dion Kliner
However we see our world, it is very much through the acquisition and use of language, especially speech, that we individually make our peace with it. Even though speech seems to be deeply, consciously organized and controlled, it also contains the unconscious, the spontaneous and the unpredictable. One of its mysteries is that we can begin a sentence without being able to find evidence within ourselves of having worked out in advance how that sentence will end. Yet to have begun, to have been able to correctly place one word after the next to build a coherent thought, we must have done precisely that.

Richard Clements’ Day Treadeth On Night demands language, but is also deeply engaged with mystery and arcane knowledge. It is animated by those qualities of speech that surpass language, and is an appeal for us to see not just with our eyes, but to reconnect with the material world and see with our bodies. Language is important but not more so than things like the hard shine of copper, the roughness of sand cast aluminum and the soft slumpiness of string.

Of the eight works, three are exemplars of Day Treadeth On Night as an extended meditation on the way the mind inscribes itself on the material of the world. Day Treads On Night (After Gill) are two brick-like sculptures that look like those of Carl Andre after Lawrence Weiner has gotten his hands on them. Imprinted with a contemporized version of the titular Day Treadeth on Night, they are inversions of Night Treadeth on Day by the English sculptor Eric Gill (1882-1940). Whereas Gill’s “brick” is carved stone and unique, Clements’ are of clay and cast plaster, and infinitely reproducible. In terms of sculptural material and process, the latter are pale ghosts of the former, but all three are literal renditions of concept imposed on material.

gutter/through is a “U”-shaped length of copper open on one end and capped on the other. The capped end is lifted up off the floor on two mahogany wedges. In terms of transporting a flow, it gives the sense of being unidirectional, of having a beginning and an end. It makes me want to believe it has a beginning. It gives a simple demonstration that what we cannot experience, though our minds tell us otherwise, is that perfect geometric figure called a circle. When Clements looks out at the world, he understands that he sees it as his mind arranges it, and over-written by language. Clements’ work, like Gill’s, concerns itself with process but doesn’t make it the subject, and harbors a latent Christianity; and as in Luria’s story, it contains the desired search to repair the rifts between language and the world. It gives a simple demonstration that beneath the many ways we may organize the world, there is an unchanging material on which our ideas work.


Dion Kliner works as a sculptor. His current interest is in working exclusively with plaster in a project known as “The Whore of Art.”