

Julian Hoerber: "Turn Around – Julian Hoerber's Latest Solo Show Takes Off"

Written by Michael Slenske

November 9, 2015



When Julian Hoerber was growing up, the Los Angeles-based artist would visit the Philadelphia Museum of Art with his father and grandmother. It was there that he first saw Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donnés* and to this day he has a Proustian memory of that painting, especially as it related to the experience he had inside the two-story fiberglass human heart you can walk through at the neighboring Science Museum. 'These are parallel experiences for me and if there is this formative moment, it's where the machine and the classical bumps up against the weird and irrational,' says Hoerber, noting this merger of conceptual and physical architectures played heavily on him as a child. 'I grew up surrounded by a lot of architects.'

His parents redesigned a few homes (one of which was a Frank Furness structure), Anne Tyng's daughter was his babysitter (the Tyngs were neighbors), and Ant Farm's Chip Lord had given the family posters which hung around the house. 'I kind of absorbed architecture by osmosis, and I always avoided it in my own practice,' says Hoerber, who found himself more frequently observing buildings rather than taking in art museums when he was traveling for his own exhibitions. 'After a few stumbles, I came upon this idea of trying to design a pavilion.' In the process of conceiving this imagined structure, a raft of architectural ideas started materialising in other forms. 'I realised going into something massive would give me a lot of space to be inventive,' says Hoerber, who began with the idea of an airport terminal because it was an 'introspective structure' and the notion of the journey was, to him, the central Western metaphor for narrative. 'The terminal continually returns to its own center and that to me seemed like the psychoanalytical journey.'

Though there was never a hard plan to find patrons to instigate the space, the first fruits of this process are now on display in 'The Inward Turn', Hoerber's new solo show at San Francisco's Jessica Silverman Gallery. There, he riffs on Klein's bottle — a glass sculptural iteration of the Möbius strip conceived by the German mathematician Felix Klein in 1882 — as well as bovine intestinal tracts, which gave birth to a labyrinthine series

of beige, pink and gray acrylic on linen paintings he calls 'Floorplans'. They speak to the etymological roots of rumination and the security lines at airports.

'I look for emotional and psychological parallels of the structures,' says Hoeber, who also created sculptures rendered with foamcore and Japanese kozo paper or pigmented fiberglass and reinforced ultracel cement. They allude to these looping structures and take construction notes from a cast concrete Tadao Ando model he'd seen at Paris' Centre Pompidou last fall. 'I'm constantly doing this circuitous and ruminating process in order to develop these forms,' says Hoeber. 'A lot of what has come out in this show is trying to puzzle through the process of model-making and techniques and those techniques produce other types of forms.'

Whether or not they ever materialise as a pavilion is a different story. 'A lot of artists have grand ambitions, but that usually means generating capital and that's not where the energy is for me,' he says, noting that if he were to realise an actual structure an ideal setting might look like the overgrown sculpture garden outside Mexico City's Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo. 'If this were ever built I would love for it to decay in a weird way that would be penetrated by forces of nature.'