

ARTFORUM

DOVE BRADSHAW

“Poetry is everywhere evident,” Dove Bradshaw once said, which leads one to wonder what was poetic about the works in “Unintended Consequences”—a presentation of eight abstract sculptures, all from 2015–16, and eleven linen canvases, all covered with silver and liver of sulfur, and most from 2015. The works on view had an Abstract Expressionist look: They seemed intensely, even wildly, expressive, fraught with energy, beside themselves with excitement, dramatically restless. Yet this effect was deceptive—the sculptures are in fact



assisted readymades. To create these works, Bradshaw first collected spent bullets, all warped and deformed from the force of impact, and made 3-D scans of them. Then she “printed” the bullets out at roughly thirty times their original size, and finally patinated the “blown-up” objects in rubber or in various metals. Placed on pedestals and glittering in the gallery lights, these found abstractions are the dazzling keepsakes of a fired gun: the aftermath of violence—of destruction—in seductive form.

The paintings, meanwhile, continue a mode of artmaking Bradshaw began in 1984, when she first applied liver of sulfur to silver. In these refulgent works, the sulfur (a chemical typically used in metalwork to form a patina) appears to have burned the silver leaf, leaving streaks of black—dark marks that emphasize the ever-present strain of destructiveness in her work, the death-inflected or even death-infected. Unlike the AbEx painter heroically revealing his or her inner self, Bradshaw is more like an alchemist. She sets in motion a transformation—a chain reaction—whose particular final shape she can’t anticipate. The results are entropic, unpredictable, marked with chaos, at once geological and otherworldly, like the volcanic surface of a distant planet.

Bradshaw has long been a follower of Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, and Merce Cunningham: Her first work, *Plain Air*, 1969, was an homage to Duchamp; she became an artistic adviser to the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1984; and she collaborated with Cage. She leaves the work in a productive limbo, the difference between art and found object or material seemingly permanently blurred and arbitrary.

So is that “poetry”? Are Bradshaw’s mind-teasing and eye-provoking Dada-esque works “poems?” Her work is certainly tinged with a certain Romantic sensibility. At Sandra Gering Inc. in New York, a simultaneous presentation of Bradshaw’s work focused on her “Angles,” a series she has been working on since 2000. Each of these works is

Kuspit, Donald. ‘Dove Bradshaw.’ *Artforum*, May, 2016.

SANDRA GERING INC

14 EAST 63RD STREET NEW YORK NY 10065

TEL 646-336-7183 SANDRAGERINGINC.COM



SG

created on a triangular ground, and features a painted triangle that is exactly one quarter of the size of the support. Within these basic parameters—a triangle within a triangle—Bradshaw finds significant room for variation. She employs materials such as wax, oil, gesso, plaster, wood, and linen, and uses an expansive palette to create a wide range of effects. She also orients the works on the wall in different ways, and changes their position during a show's run. She plays God—even if God, unlike Bradshaw, left nothing to chance. Nature, she seems to tell us, can and cannot be controlled: It follows a predictable if eccentric course.

SANDRA GERING INC

14 EAST 63RD STREET NEW YORK NY 10065
TEL 646-336-7183 SANDRAGERINGINC.COM

