

OFF PARADISE

Mitchell Charbonneau

Senseless

September 7 – December 7, 2021

Opening Friday, September 17, 4-8pm



Off Paradise is pleased to present *Senseless*, an exhibition of new work by New York-based artist Mitchell Charbonneau.

Mitchell Charbonneau's recent cast resin sculptures test the limits of durability in the context of artistic reproduction. The artist places literal and figurative pressure on utilitarian design—those objects made to be collapsible, portable, and transferable—and situates durability as both a material condition as well as a material property, linking the inert world of objects more directly to human intervention. Across a series of cast resin sculptures and installations that replicate everyday utilitarian objects such as folding chairs, shelving units and air fresheners, Charbonneau underscores how production, use, circulation, and disuse determine the accrual and loss of an object's value and emphasizes the anthropomorphic current that teems below the surfaces of these objects.

We may tire of the seemingly endless cycles through which sundry materials appear and reappear in our lives, but as Charbonneau shows, traces of the human teem within each of these materials, and we are increasingly beholden to their utility. We expect our objects to function so that we may carry out the most basic of our tasks. Charbonneau turns our attention to this dependence by intervening—violently—at the heart of the object's function. He smashes folding chairs with a sledgehammer to incise dents, fissures, and ruptures onto the surface of the metal, which is later translated, skin-like, into a hard but brittle resin. Chairs, piled up in tenuous vertical and horizontal arrangements, become a crucial point of intervention for Charbonneau. In their platonic ideal, chairs index the body and offer it a source of comfort and relief—think of how we name a chair's constituent parts: arms, backs, legs. Here, Charbonneau divorces his chairs

from their function by intertwining their legs and bruising their seats and surfaces; modified and manipulated beyond reasonable use, the chairs nevertheless retain the essential qualities of chairness, their forms enduring. The chair becomes an instrument through which violence is enacted and anxiety is displaced. Similarly, *Untitled (Wall Support)* is a series of sculptures that replicate modular shelving units, affixed and then rearranged in combinations that suggest the possibility that something may be hung, tacked, or suspended from their armatures. But bereft of any objects to perch from their many openings, they serve as reminders of their uselessness.

If Charbonneau's works lay bare the many problems of aestheticizing the utilitarian, the works also invite the viewer to consider the limitations of aesthetics themselves when it comes to assessing art, whether for the market or for pleasure. Small variations in color, arrangement, and form make a subtle but powerful point that the options afforded to consumers, rational as they may seem, are but false options, intended to disguise the paucity of innovation in late capitalism. The promise of durability—of both materials and the systems through which they are produced—is a promise deferred and forgotten. What Charbonneau makes legible is the absurdity—the senselessness—of the violent logics that undergird these systems.

— Tausif Noor



Mitchell Charbonneau (b. 1994, Bedford, New Hampshire) received his BFA from The Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York in 2016. Charbonneau's work involves making subtle and fastidiously wrought sculptures in resin. His debut solo show *Gone in 60 Seconds*, opened at Team Gallery, New York in early 2020. He was included in *Ascensions*, a group exhibition at Off Paradise in the fall of 2020. Charbonneau currently lives and works in New York.

Off Paradise is a new gallery on Walker Street founded by Natacha Polaert in the fall of 2019. The name evokes the old neighborhood of Five Points, at the center of which was a small, triangular park, full of hope and grime, called Paradise Square. It also invokes Paradise Alley, the artists' and poets' colony on the then-godforsaken corner of Avenue A and East 11th Street that is referenced in Jack Kerouac's novel *The Subterraneans*. Off Paradise is a fictional place, right *off* Paradise, adjacent to it, but not exactly it.

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Clockwise



Mitchell Charbonneau

Senseless, 2021

Cast urethane, epoxy, fiberglass, stainless steel, acrylic paint
29 x 36 x 24 in. (73.66 x 91.44 x 60.96 cm)

MC1086OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

Black Ice, 2021

Painted bronze
7 x 3 in. (17.78 x 7.62 cm)

Edition of 3 + 2AP

MC1155OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

Senseless, 2021

Cast urethane, epoxy, fiberglass, stainless steel, acrylic paint
30 x 30 x 20 in. (76.2 x 76.2 x 50.8 cm)

MC1122OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

Senseless, 2021

Cast urethane, epoxy, fiberglass, stainless steel, acrylic paint

53 x 25 x 32 in. (134.62 x 63.50 x 81.28 cm)

MC1148OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

New Car Scent, 2021

Painted bronze

7 x 3.5 in. (17.78 x 8.89 cm)

Edition of 3 + 2AP

MC1156OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

Senseless, 2021

Cast urethane, epoxy, fiberglass, stainless steel, acrylic paint

32 x 44 x 32 in. (81.28 x 111.76 x 81.28 cm)

MC1123OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

Senseless, 2021

Cast urethane, epoxy, fiberglass, stainless steel, acrylic paint

48 x 24 x 22 in. (121.92 x 60.96 x 55.88 cm)

MC1159OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

Untitled (Wall Support), 2020

Cast urethane, fiberglass, epoxy, stainless steel, acrylic paint
30 x 40 x 1 in. (76.2 x 101.6 x 2.54 cm)

MC1152OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

Wild Cherry, 2021

Painted bronze
7 x 3 in. (17.78 x 7.62 cm)

Edition of 3 + 2AP

MC1150OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

Senseless, 2021

Cast urethane, epoxy, fiberglass, stainless steel, acrylic paint
30 x 54 x 20 in. (76.2 x 137.16 x 50.8 cm)

MC1154OP



Mitchell Charbonneau

Senseless, 2021

Cast urethane, epoxy, fiberglass, stainless steel, acrylic paint
32 x 20 x 10 in. (81.28 x 50.8 x 25.4 cm)

MC1160OP