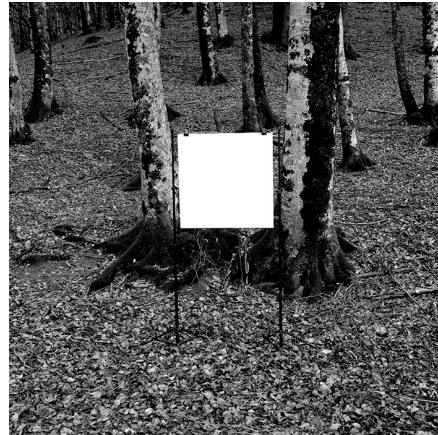


PHOEBE POHL

TITLE(S): BLACK FOREST

ARTIST: IÑIGO MANGLANO-OVALLE



1. How does the artist use the SPACE in a way that is different from an art “object”?

In *Black Forest* the space is fully engaged by the huge, charcoal cubes. Because they are larger than human scale and in a pair the viewer exists within their space and is forced to constantly consider the physical connection between them, as well as the relationship between these architectural forms and their own bodies.

2. How is time used/ needed to experience the work?

Time is introduced into the work through the photographs of the Black Forest presented alongside the cubes. Shared aspects between the two elements, such as the charcoal surface texture and the repetition of the square, force the viewer to find or create connections between the present moment in the gallery space and the past moment captured in the woods.

3. What is the experience/role of the artist in making this work?

In addition to taking the photographs of the Black Forest, Manglano-Ovalle came up with the complex conceptual structure that underlies the piece. Through effective design, he is able to approach topics such as deforestation and technology while also keeping the work aesthetically minimal and clean.

4. What is the experience/ role of the visitor/ participant in this work? What type of audience would respond well to this piece?

Because the piece is, intentionally, very subtle, an active and engaged audience is ideal for its understanding. Because the separate aspects are displayed within a larger space, it seems necessary for viewers to walk around and experience them physically. This process of discovering spatial connection should hopefully lead the viewer to make conceptual connections as well. For example, passing between the two cubes could feel like walking in a heavily wooded forest, therefore, inspiring the viewer to consider connections between the gallery space and the Black Forest itself.

5. Is this piece compelling initially (visually, aurally, conceptually) if so, what makes it draw you in? What about it is original/ seductive/strange/etc?

The piece is very striking visually, initially because of its abnormality and then because of its detail. The huge cube forms, because of their size, are instantly reminiscent of houses, or at least some kind of shelter. However, they are eerily closed off, with no doors and no windows; nothing breaks up their perfectly flat planes. The black color is unexpected and unnerving, because it seems so unnatural for something so large. The surface texture, on the other hand, feels very familiar; its fine lines and minute details it encourages the viewer to come and look more closely.

7. Is there a certain amount of **conceptual depth** or complexity that allows a **sustaining** interest on the part of the viewer?

I think the artist's choice to leave the work relatively open-ended allows for sustaining interest. The separate elements are clearly connected but exactly how is not dictated by the artist. It is up to the viewer to decide what conclusions are possible and, of those, which speak to them most

strongly. The necessity of this active, engaging though process encourages viewers to spend more time contemplating the work and often results in a more meaningful conclusion once one is reached.

8 Are there elements of **surprise** in which something new is revealed over time? Where something develops that you didn't expect? This can occur by imaginative ways of handling the material or revealing a twist in the idea after it is well established, etc.

I think an element of surprise enters the piece in the photographs. The white square within the forest scenes calls into question the notion that this forest is an untouched, natural environment. Because the print is displayed on a white wall, the pure white square appears almost like a hole in the photo itself, through which the gallery wall is visible. This transforms the flat image into a sculptural object that manages to engage the space around it. Conceptually, this provides much more nuanced options when determining meaning within the piece.

9 How is the work **resolved** in the way that makes sense for the project.? The various themes and metaphors should pull together into a unified whole that makes sense.

The work is resolved in that every aspect is connected and therefore meaningful. However, what meaning the viewer actually gets out of the work is fully up to them. When people are presented with this sort of situation, with separate elements they must connect, the conclusion they do reach is far more personal, often making it more impactful also. This subtle and non-directional form of political art is preferred by Manglano-Ovalle.

10 What type of **commitment** does the artist show to the work? Skill Development, attention to detail, unified approach, etc.

I am impressed by Manglano-Ovalle's ability to make no move that was unintentional or extraneous. Every surface texture, form, and plane within the gallery space contributes to the overall reading of the piece. Every inch of space is engaged.