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False/Positive

On the art of Carol Bove

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Carol Bove, Cutting Corners, 2018, stainless steel, urethane paint, 35 7⁄8 × 38 7⁄8 × 38 5⁄8". Photo: Maris Hutchinson/EPW Studio.

THERE IS, IT SEEMS TO ME, a right wrong way and a wrong right way to see Carol Bove's folded steel sculptures. Take, for example, her 2018 *Cutting Corners*. I know it's wrong, clearly and demonstrably, to view this object as anything but hard steel, yet one *sees* it wrongly: as soft, thick folds of draping fabric transforming into crumpled cardboard or rubber tubing supporting a glossy black plastic cylinder, culminating in a series of six-by-six-inch steel boxes at the end of its three tangled tubes. Adding

to the illusion of soft pliability is the distinct sense that the tubes are filling with air, as if internal pressure were pushing them outward from within, even as, paradoxically, they appear to be deflating at the same time. Much like those indefatigable tube men manically dancing up and down outside of used-car lots, extending and collapsing with each new breath, *Cutting Corners* appears impossibly suspended between two opposing movements of pressure: pushing out from within, buckling under from above.

As one rotates around the sculpture, the illusory softness of the tubes suddenly hardens, reverting if not to steel exactly then to something *steel-y*, as if the industrial materiality of *Cutting Corners* maintains its sense of illusion by imitating something very similar to, without actually being, steel. As the material appears to shift from soft to hard, the outward and downward movements of the tubes no longer suggest the gentle pressure of filling and escaping air, but imply a decidedly more violent bending and crushing of metal, as if the tubes had been pushed out of shape against their will. This contradictory effect creates the impression that *Cutting Corners* weighs next to nothing when seen from one viewpoint yet from another feels incredibly heavy. Or better yet, I have much the same experience of weight that the philosopher Stanley Cavell describes in his 1969 account of Anthony Caro's steel sculpture: "One might wish to say they are weightless," Cavell writes, "but that would not mean that these massively heavy materials seem light, but, more surprisingly, neither light nor heavy, resistant to the concept of weight altogether."[1]

John Chamberlain, H.A.W.K., 1959, welded and painted steel, 51 1/2 × 53 × 41". Photo: Andy Romer. © Fairweather & Fairweather LTD/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Cavell's interest in Caro's sculptures lies less in their resistance to weight per se and more in how his experience of them as neither heavy nor light openly defies what he knows to be true. They "must be felt, not merely known," he writes. By Cavell's account, then, he would be wrong (in the sense of being inattentive, inconstant, and untrue to his experience) to see these sculptures as having the same physical properties of everyday material objects even though in a certain literal sense he would be undeniably right to do so. By the same token, I know it's demonstrably false to see *Cutting Corners* as simultaneously light and heavy, soft and hard, pliable and inflexible, inflating and deflating, pushing out and crushing in. But I also know I'm right to see it this way.

Anyone who has marveled at Gian Lorenzo Bernini's almost alchemical ability to turn a single block of marble into, by turns, flesh, velvet, hair, silk, brocade, brass, eyes, lace, lips, and so on, knows that Bove's illusionism is, in and of itself, hardly a new development in the history of sculpture. But if Bernini and Bove share the age-old sculptural ambition to defeat the physical properties of their respective materials, they do so using radically different idioms—Baroque realism in the case of Bernini, contemporary abstraction in the case of Bove—giving Bernini a decided head start. Knowing that we're looking at a face or a richly embroidered velvet cloak, we are predisposed to see Bernini's marble in those terms, his work thus possessing a distinct advantage that Bove's abstract sculptures quite obviously lack.

Anthony Caro, Early One Morning, 1962, painted steel and aluminum. Installation view, Tate Britain, London, 2005. © Barford Sculptures Ltd.

For Clement Greenberg, the shift from figurative illusionism à la Bernini to the abstract illusionism of modernist sculpture marks a move from "the illusion of things" (hair, skin, buttons, brocade, etc.) to "the illusion of modalities: namely, that matter is incorporeal, weightless, and exists optically like a mirage." Surprisingly, "applied color is sanctioned" in modernist sculpture for Greenberg if it supports this mirage-

like illusionism despite its obvious association with painting and its apparent violation of that most Greenbergian of concerns, medium specificity. Or rather, applied color is sanctioned if—and only if—it doesn't appear applied. As he puts it: The "modernist sensibility, though it rejects sculptural painting of any kind, allows sculpture to be as pictorial as it pleases. Here the prohibition of one art's entering the domain of the other [i.e., painting entering sculpture] is suspended." What makes applied color "pictorial" (and therefore acceptable) as opposed to "sculptural painting" (and therefore unacceptable) is its ability "to render substance entirely optical."[2] In much the way that Anne Truitt described her work as "color in three dimensions, color set free, to the point where . . . the support should dissolve into pure color," pictorial color in sculpture sublates material form into optical illusion. With sculptural painting, by contrast, color remains a purely literal coating of pigment on a physical surface.[3]

The two postwar modernists who most emphatically took up the problem of color in sculpture are Caro and John Chamberlain, both of whom are clear precedents for and commonly cited influences on Bove's work. In the case of Chamberlain, the connection to Bove tends to focus on their shared use of crushed and twisted steel. But equally important and often missed is the fact that Chamberlain, as Donald Judd observed, was "the first to use automobile metal and to use color successfully in sculpture."[4] Which is to say that *because* he was the first automobile metal sculptor, he was, *as a result*, the first postwar modernist to use color successfully in sculpture. Or as Darby Bannard puts it, "Chamberlain's crushed auto-part sculptures . . . use color effectively because his materials are colored to begin with, so we are prepared for it."[5] The applied color in a work like Chamberlain's 1959 *H.A.W.K.*, in other words, feels inherent to the crushed plate-steel car parts in such a way as to seem entirely natural even in those instances when the artist would add color to the previously polychromed steel.

Carol Bove, Particoloured Heideggerianism, 2022, stainless steel, urethane paint, 28 1/2 × 36 × 11 1/2". Photo: Maris Hutchinson.

Beginning in 1960, Caro's abstract steel sculpture revealed another, significantly more influential solution to the problem of applied color. Commonly understood as a kind of optical binding agent, color consolidates the otherwise disjunctive syntactic elements of Caro's sculpture into a unified whole. At the same time, as Charles Ray notes, Caro's sculpture "carries its rightness of color not on its surface," not as "a painted skin," but as if it were somehow natural to the steel itself. "The right orange or red," as Ray puts it, "is of the sculpture, not secondary to it."[6] The color in Caro's sculpture, in other words, does not feel applied, even though, of course, it is. And one important consequence of this newfound chromatic primacy is that, in a work like *Early One Morning*, 1962, his sculpture assumes two very different experiences of form depending on one's viewpoint. Viewing it from an angle or from the side, we feel its brute physical presence pressing heavily on the floor before us—we feel its obdurate mass, volume, weight, planar surface, line, edge, and color in material terms. Seen frontally along the central horizontal axis, from a position directly facing the large rectangular "sail," by contrast, the work defies gravity, compressing into what Rosalind Krauss calls the "pictorial view."[7]

As many critics have noted, Bove's almost signature use of cadmium red light, the very same color that we see in *Early One Morning*, signals her engagement not only with a range of modernist sculptors—Caro in particular, but also Mark di Suvero, Alexander Calder, and Judd (especially important)—but with applied color as a distinctly modernist problem to be overcome. Looking at Bove's 2019 *VY Canis Majoris,* for example, I *feel* its color to be innate, belonging to the metal just as black belongs to coal. We feel this is right, knowing it's wrong. Or as the curator Catherine Craft describes it, "we struggle to reconcile what we see and physically experience with what our brains tell us. . . . The paint's light absorbing matte skin creates the impression of substance, as if a tube had been cast out of pure pigment."[8] Just as importantly, however, *VY Canis Majoris* marks its debt to Caro through its front-facing view onto the flat end of the black cylinder. Much like *Early One Morning*, the surrounding tubes in Bove's work take on a decidedly imagistic, pictorial quality, their crumpled strands suggesting wide, overlapping brushstrokes varying in tone and texture depending on the play of shadow and light.

Carol Bove, VY Canis Majoris, 2019, stainless steel, urethane paint, 25 1/4 × 38 3/8 × 32 1/4". Photo: Maris Hutchinson.

The connection to Caro's front-facing compressed "pictorial" view is particularly evident in Bove's wall-mounted sculptures, as they foreground the imagistic quality of the colored planar surface. Hanging directly on the wall, *Particoloured Heideggerianism*, 2022, for example, appears notably painting-like as its almost rectilinear outer frame of rectangular tubing wraps around a central high-gloss chartreuse cylinder mounted on a horizonal bar in the same color but in a matte finish. The two painted colors of the outer tubing—shocking pink at one end and a rich orange sherbet at the other—fade seamlessly into each other, feeling *almost* garish, *almost* pink-flamingo kitschy, but (amazingly) not quite. Running parallel to the central chartreuse bar, the orange-sherbet end of the outer tube forms the horizontal upper framing edge of the work, feeling once again like thick construction paper or crisply folded cardstock. The pink end forms the lower horizontal framing edge, curving into the center of the composition as it turns up the left side. Like a monstrous earthworm or a section of large intestine, the pink end of the tube seems to undulate in waves of peristaltic movement, pushing its invisible contents from end to end.

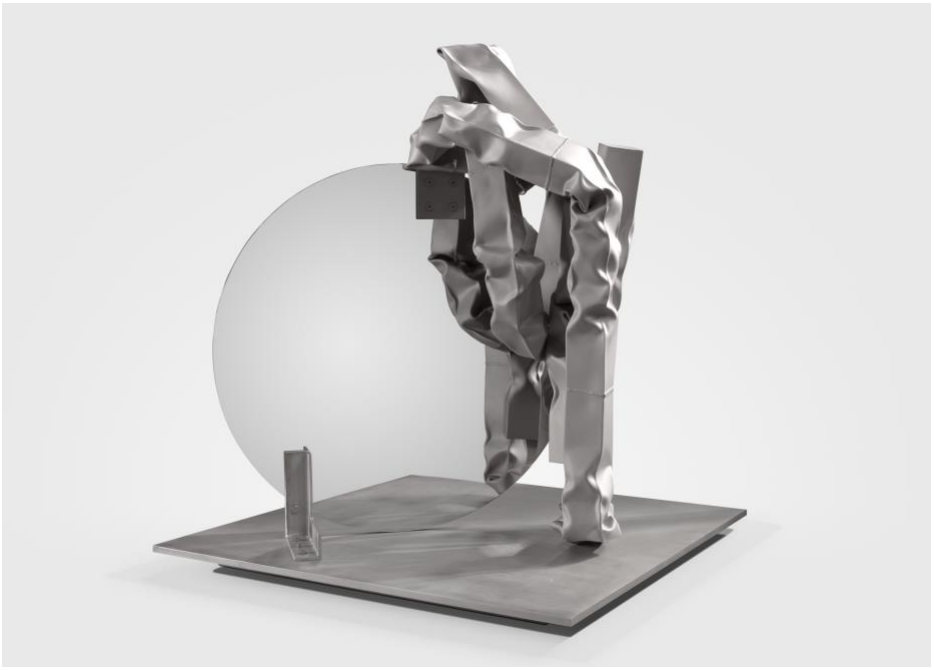
Particoloured Heideggerianism faces us as we face it, its colors and forms flattening to evoke, without quite giving way to, painting or digital images on a screen, like a Photoshopped mash-up of geometric abstraction and Tom Wesselmann's high-gloss Pop. Consistent with Michael Fried's view of Caro's sculpture as "nearly pictorial"—the qualifying "nearly" being all important—Bove's even flatter, recent wall-hanging works (debuting at her current retrospective at New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum) could easily, but mistakenly, be taken for paintings.[9] As in her freestanding sculpture, the

central geometric forms of these works are painted, but the planar ground in which they are inserted is anodized aluminum, dyed to produce a chromatic effect that is bound to the surface rather than coated on top of it.

View of "Carol Bove: Vase/Face," 2022, David Zwirner, Paris. Photo: Maris Hutchinson.

If Bove's wall-hanging sculptures make their engagement with the "nearly pictorial" explicit, her large disk works do the same for the double viewpoint of material presence and planar image.In a 2022 work like the *Vase Face III / The Skeleton Juggling a Baby in the Central Tableau of Heaven*, for example, the very title underscores the importance of different perceptual viewpoints (per the reference to the Rubin vase illusion, in which an image can be seen as either two faces in profile looking at each other or the outline of a vase in the negative space between them). Reversing the illusion of color become metal, its raw steel is sandblasted to a smooth matte finish, creating the entirely false impression of being painted. Most importantly, it features a large flat disk made of laminated glass and heat-fused ink, producing a glossy gray reflective surface that once again appears to be inherent to the material. But just as these large gray disks reify the front-facing imagistic view of the planar surface, similarly sized aluminum disks in related sculptures such as *Hardware Romance*, 2021, are polished to an almost literal mirror surface. Clearly referencing Constantin Brancusi's polished reflective surfaces, Bove's mirrors, rather than foregrounding the planar surface, do the precise opposite, dissolving it almost entirely into a play of chromatically variable reflections. Depending on what is placed in front of it or what crosses its path, the colors that appear in the mirror once again seem bound to the surface, however fleetingly. Alternating between the obdurate materiality of the glossy reflective gray color and the near invisibility of the mirror finish, Bove's disks function like an on/off current—now you see it, now you don't—affirming and negating the planar vantage point from one work to the next.

Crucially, however, there is another view onto Bove's sculpture beyond the double illusionism of its oblique materialism and front-facing near-pictorialism. We see this all-important third possibility in the conspicuous bolt-and-steel coupling of *VY Canis Majoris* that, seen from the rear, attaches the glossy black cylinder to the bulk of the work. Disrupting the illusionism of the right-wrong way to see the sculpture—there's no right or wrong way to see the attachment mechanism, it simply is what it is—the brute literalism of the bolt and steel erupts within the illusionistic space of the sculpture like a gash across the surface of a trompe l'oeil painting. And in so doing, it distinguishes Bove's sculpture from Judd's Minimalism and Caro's modernism, both clearly signaled in the cadmium red light favored by the two artists. But if Judd's literalism and Caro's illusionism represent the extreme and irreconcilable ends of the artistic spectrum during the '60s and '70s, Bove's work integrates and combines these apparent artistic antipodes with a contemporary twist. And it does so, I want to argue, not through old-fashioned dialectics of sublation or some kind of aesthetic homeopathy, ingesting the poison to cure the body, but through making visible the theatricality that is the very hallmark of our time.



Carol Bove, Hardware Romance, 2021, stainless steel, 83 1/2 × 72 × 72". Photo: Maris Hutchinson.

Beyond the strictly formal concerns of applied color, oblique materialism versus front-facing pictorial illusionism, the planar surface, and so on, the greater importance of Caro's work to Bove lay in his ability "to make radically abstract sculptures out of concepts and experiences which seem—which but for his making are and would remain—inescapably literal and therefore irremediably theatrical: and by so doing

he redeems the time if anyone does."[10] Writing these words in 1968, Fried condemns not only Minimalism, but the literalism and theatricality of "the time." Bove does much the same for our time, but with an all-important twist. Before she does so, however, Bove begins with Fried's time—the time of Minimalism, the high-water mark of literalism and theatricality.

FOLLOWING A SERIES of drawings based on *Playboy* models that appeared in the magazine from 1967 to 1973, Bove's initial move into sculpture in the early 2000s could hardly be more clear in its concern with the late '60s and early '70s, and with Minimalism in particular. Recalling Judd's well-known foray into geometric furniture design, Bove's *Utopia or Oblivion*, 2002, consists of two identical wood-and-steel Knoll Steelcase end tables stacked one on top of the other to produce an open cube à la Larry Bell's sculptures, with legs forming a crude pedestal. But despite the obvious references to Minimalism's forms and materials, the work also invokes the larger cultural field ("the time") of the 1960s. The upper surface contains four books beloved by the '60s counterculture, including Buckminster Fuller's 1969 *Utopia or Oblivion: The Prospects for Humanity*; laid flat and neatly piled, these books support another, much larger book of photography, splayed open to a period image of a woman's nude torso. A Fuller Tensegrity model (fetishized throughout the '60s and '70s by architects, hippies, and pseudo-spiritualists alike) sits on the lower table, mostly filling the interior of the cube. This concern with the '60s and early '70s extends in turn to Bove's later shelf sculptures. In a work like *Innerspace Bullshit*, 2007, for instance, we again see an array of '60s and '70s cultural and countercultural references, and the nod to Minimalism is, as before, entirely evident. Literalizing (in more senses than one) Greenberg's 1967 jab at Minimalism as "the continued infiltration of Good Design into what purports to be advanced and highbrow art," the stacked shelves on the wall-mounted unit recall, most obviously, Judd's stacked wall-mounted works, but can be taken as a kind of stand-in for Minimalism and its "infiltration" by design more broadly.[11] Throughout the roughly decade-long production span of her table and shelf works, Bove presents us with what Barry Schwabsky, in a 2005 *Artforum* essay, called "a fictive reconstruction of a bygone time," one evidenced by the carefully selected period vibe of objects: peacock feathers, decorative driftwood, seashells, macramé mandalas, beaded curtains, Plexiglas photo-cubes, and other démodé decorative classics of the era.

Carol Bove, Utopia or Oblivion, 2002, Knoll tables, books, wood, string, 45 × 18 × 18".

As Bove has often stressed, her interests lie as much in the display as in the choice of objects. “She is,” Schwabsky observes, “the artist-as-collector but also the artist-as-art-director.” It is this concern with display, he argues, that makes her table and shelf works “theatrical, but diffidently so.”[12] Schwabsky is right, I think, to emphasize Bove’s not-straightforward theatricality, and part of what he’s driving at, it seems to me, is the way in which Bove’s early work puts the theatricality of display itself on view. Or more precisely, in her neatly arranged period-eye knickknacks and allusions to Minimalism, Bove makes (to quote Fried again) the “inescapably literal” and the “irremediably theatrical” of “the time” visible through the underlying mechanism that drives theatricality: display. The tables and shelves on which this all takes place do more than just recall Minimalist cubes and wall-mounted specific objects, however; they, too, give off a distinctive late-’60s/early-’70s-ish vibe, as vouched for in the Kodachrome photograph of my parents circa 1972, in which they very proudly—even theatrically—show off the same Poul Cadovius shelving unit that would come to be Bove’s shelf of choice. More than just a question of style or design sensibility, a large part of what grounds these shelves in this distinct historical moment is the way in which they feel at once industrial and artisanal, factory produced and hand assembled. By the time of her later steel sculptures, these artifacts and traces of the human hand have all but—or in many cases, entirely—disappeared. Radically attenuated, the visible weld and bolts are all that remain.

After a decade or so of making various iterations of her table and shelf works, Bove began to tire of the recurring misapprehension that viewers need to read every book and explore in depth every reference on display in order to understand the work. By the end of 2010, Martin Herbert notes, “a shift was on the horizon.”[13] The catalyst for this shift was two works for two important exhibitions, the 2011 Venice Biennale and Documenta 13 the following year. For Venice, Bove produced *The Foamy Saliva of a Horse*, 2011, an installation presented on a chest-height, dimly lit platform consisting of many of the same kinds of objects found in her shelf works: shells, driftwood, and peacock feathers, but now combined with a sizable piece of discolored polystyrene eroded by the Brooklyn harbor currents where it was found, as well as netting and two sizable pieces of rusted scrap metal. Less important than the specific elements of the work—although scrap metal will be especially important to her later output—was the fact that, as Bove describes it, the work “had to be something really bodily and *not* cerebral.” It had to be, in other words, felt rather than known, much as we feel her later work to be light, made of fabric, grounded in color inherent to the material, etc., even though we know better. At the same time and relatedly, Bove had an epiphany of sorts: “You don’t perceive the small things as small and the big things as big because they’re on a platform.” As a result, “because you enter the space psychologically . . . it’s not real space, it’s imaginary space.”[14] Unlike her previous shelf and table displays, *The Foamy Saliva of a Horse* created a sense of illusion; a sense of seeing things according to how they feel, not as they are; a sense of seeing things the right wrong way.

Carol Bove, Innerspace Bullshit*, 2007, books, comic, bronze, Marfa rock, ocean ephemera, mirror, pamphlets, wood and metal shelves, 42 × 36 1/8 × 12". Photo: Tom Powel.*

For Documenta 13 Bove presented her first outdoor sculpture, *Flora’s Garden*, 2021, which again consisted of various elements, now placed directly on the ground in a straight line: a totemic I beam supporting a large piece of fossilized wood, a series of brass cubes in a steel stand, a classical statue of

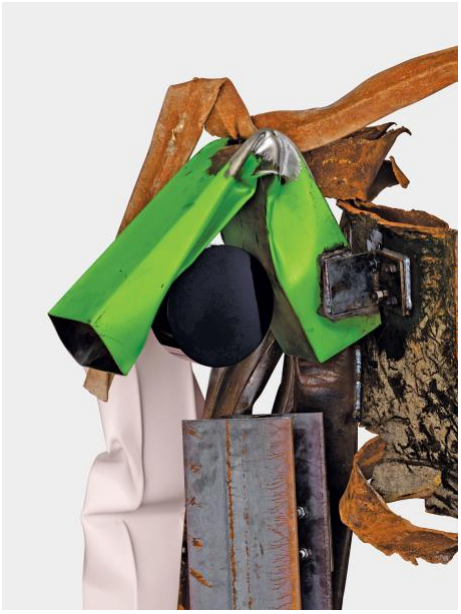
Flora (preexisting to the site), an empty concrete plinth, and a white-powder-coated curving steel sculpture that she called a "glyph." The fossilized wood, which is made of stone but looks and feels like wood, immediately establishes the play of illusion that will be so important in her later bent-steel sculptures. Just as importantly, however, all of the sculptural components of the work establish clear references to the history of sculpture: the I beam to di Suvero; the brass cubes to the Italian architect, designer, and artist Carlo Scarpa; the classical image of Flora as both a readymade reference to the extended history of sculpture and the illusionism of marble carving as it transforms into fabric, hair, skin, and so on; the concrete plinth to Robert Morris's mid-'60s Minimalism; and the looping white steel glyph to the plop art of Alice Aycock, Isamu Noguchi, Alexander Liberman, et al. The looping white steel of the glyph gave rise to a series of further glyphs, their high-gloss finish-fetish circular looping tubes being but a short step away from her colorful bent rectangular tubing.

As much as the looping circular tubes of the glyphs chart a clear path into Bove's later steel sculptures, they are, nonetheless, entirely at odds with the visible welds and bolts that began to appear in works like *VY Canis Majoris.* For crucially, the glyphs, the rectangular tubes, and the high-gloss cylinders contain not the slightest visible trace of their fabrication. The significance of this absence becomes apparent if we look to Bove's 2016 steel sculpture *Hylomorph I.* Characteristic of her work from around this time, it again features a high-gloss black cylinder with two square matte steel tubes, in this case colored an impeccable pinkish cream and a visibly dinged and scratched-up medium-light green. Highly unusual in her work, the scratched paint becomes worn off entirely at the uppermost bend of the green tube, exposing the raw steel below like an open wound. This, of course, totally ruins the double illusion of color-become-steel and steel-become-fabric—twin illusions we still see in its cream-colored counterpart—in the same way that its open end exposes its interior, deflating the sensation of unseen internal pressure by revealing the tube's hollowness.[15] Much like the threaded nut-and-steel coupling that attaches the black cylinder to *Canis Majoris,* the green tube appears unambiguously literal—resolutely what it is—in marked opposition to the illusionism of the black cylinder and cream-colored tube. Adding to this sense of contrast are two sections of steel I beam, the smaller horizontal segment bolted to the larger vertical girder, jutting out like a foot. Draping over the top and running down the upper side of the sculpture is a large piece of twisted scrap metal that is, again, unambiguously non-illusionistic.

Several important aspects of this work are brought out in a 2019 interview between Bove and Johanna Burton, who at one point asks about the emotional aspect of her color. Bove responds: "I think the color and the way it's applied with the matte finish make the works hard to read as normal physical objects." But if her sculptures resist the appearance of "normal physical objects," the conspicuous disruption of this illusion through the bolts attaching the cylinders to the tubes establishes, as she puts it, a "narrative." The

presence of these attachment mechanisms, she remarks, “underscores the way these two elements [the cylinders and the tubes] sit uneasily together, that they can’t be reconciled.”

This opposition between the high-gloss cylinder and the matte-colored tubes plays out further in the quotidian quality of the I beam and scrap metal, both of which, Burton observes, “seem to carry and exhibit something of their histories about them.” Like the bolts coupling one irreconcilable element to another, Bove’s materials attach the sculpture’s aesthetic forms to the potted narratives of their past. As Bove states toward the end of the interview: “The choice of connecting materials by using a bolt or by welding is one kind of narrative. Or you could enter a narrative through the concept of the found steel. For example, you could imagine that someone made a bridge, people drove over it for decades, it corroded, and then someone else took it down and brought it to a scrap-metal yard.” Important here are not just the emphasis on the material but also, as we saw with her table and shelf works, the residual traces of the worker’s labor (“someone made a bridge . . . someone else took it down”). She concludes: “Following decades of prosperity, our infrastructure is now in decay, and massive machines have crushed up remnants of that once-solid infrastructure like little slips of paper.”[16] Whether occupying the metaphorical junkyard of history or the literal junkyard up the street, these machines that crush the obsolete castoffs of our industrial past are also, of course, the very machines that crush the discarded remnants of the “once-solid infrastructure” in Bove’s studio.



Carol Bove, Hylomorph I (detail), 2016, found steel, steel, urethane paint, 71 1/2 × 42 × 51". Photo: Dan Bradica.

As Burton suggests, there is more at stake in the opposing elements of Bove's sculptures than just formal disjunction. For between the pristine cylinder, on one hand, and the bolts, welds, and scrap metal on the other, we see two very different narratives grounded in two different manifestations of labor: one (the cylinder) premised on its effacement, the other (the bolt, the welded seams, the scrap metal) on its visibility.[17] Like a smoothed-over irritant made into a precious pearl, the glossy black cylinder tucked into *Hylomorph I* feelsat once integrated into and entirely at odds with the bulk of the sculpture: the rusted scrap metal; the scratched-up and scraped-off matte-green paint of the clearly industrial tubing; the precision cuts in the unpainted I beams; the handwritten yellow markings scrawled by some long-forgotten worker; the unadorned welds and sundry bolts throughout. The salient exception to this opposition is the similarly flawless tube that likewise conceals the labor of its fabrication as an integral part of its steel-become-fabric illusion. Seeming as if it sprang fully formed into existence, the upright cream-colored tube shifts the focus of the drama away from the high-gloss cylinder and the rusty scrap metal (etc.) toward that of its worse-for-wear green twin. For if, "following decades of prosperity," we see the Rust Belt "remnants of that once-solid infrastructure" in the scrap metal, then what, we might wonder, comes after the pristine cream-colored and shiny black surfaces? What narrative—what historical, economic moment—begins to form when the patina of perfection starts to wear with age? When the flawless becomes flawed, and the raw steel beneath the matte-green layer of urethane paint shows its true color? That moment, it seems to me, looks a lot like our current state of graceless presence.

Or put it this way: Circa 1968 it was the raw material of everyday literalism that Caro's illusionism took as the threat to overcome. But that was then. Now there is a new and arguably more insidious form of theatricality to be overcome, a greater threat to the illusionism that lies at the heart of Bove's bent and colored steel sculptures. Compared with the artificially inflected digital sheen of our present moment, it's hard not to feel almost nostalgic for the simpler days of brute analog objecthood. If the matte-colored tubes and the high-gloss cylinders "can't be reconciled," as Bove states, it's not simply because one is matte and rectangular while the other is glossy and round. Rather, they function as two distinct and opposing forms of illusionism: the matte tubes harking back to Caro's modernism, the glossy cylinders serving as a contemporary simulacrum of that illusionism. For despite being a physical object—painted steel made to mimic plastic—the cylinder in its unblemished gleam carries the distinct on-screen glow of a computer-aided design rendering, or a fresh-out-of-the-box finish-fetish Apple product, its inputs cleverly concealed. Not that the old literalism has gone away, of course: The obvious presence of the bolts and twisted metal reminds us of that in no uncertain terms. But if there's a narrative embedded in Bove's bent-steel sculptures between the rusty castoffs of yesteryear's infrastructure and today's high-gloss artificial perfection, it's her great accomplishment of having made the stakes of that story simultaneously clear, yet wholly unresolved.