

Art in Review: Making Places

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Making Places, Center for Contemporary Arts, 1050 Old Pecos Trail, 982-1338; through Sept. 22

At once intimate, self-referential, and accessible, *Making Places* is a trip down memory lane — with someone else's memories. It's a fascinating romp through time, marvelously realized, that offers insight into artistic practices and thought processes, married life, and the ephemera people gather. The last of these is important to understanding the exhibit. On their own and without context, a journal entry, a photograph, or other objects may be mundane. In the exhibit, the way a number of objects are arranged provides a sense of the real-life, tangible things that inspire art.

Making Places is a joint exhibition by two artists, married couple Linda Fleming and Michael Moore, and encompasses bodies of work by both, some pieces going back decades. In 1968 Fleming co-founded Libre, an artist community on 360 acres in the Rocky Mountains, with her husband at the time, Dean Fleming. Libre members built their own homes and created the infrastructure for the community. To this day, members of Libre are self-governed by their own agreed-upon by-laws.

Fleming met Moore in San Francisco in 1987, and they now live together in the home she built in Libre. That this is their first joint exhibition comes as a surprise. He paints. She sculpts. Between them, and important for the installation, there is so much more. The show comprises large-scale landscape paintings, journal entries, video, and maquettes crafted out of a variety of materials including balsa wood, paper, and bronze, and sculptures in powder-coated steel and chrome; these individual elements mesh to create a conceptual world. The autobiographical components are sometimes direct, as in the case of Moore's running journal, and implied, as in the everyday objects that seem to be personal belongings. Some of these items have a resemblance to Fleming's sculptures. For example, lace doilies arranged along one wall are spindly, like her sculptures and maquettes.

The overall arrangement of objects offers an ersatz glimpse into Fleming's studio. As for the journal, Moore details various automobiles the couple acquired, replete with drawings and sketches of each vehicle, and uses them as a catalyst for detailing road trips and other life moments in a series of stream-of-consciousness entries called *Auto Biographies*. The presentation takes the autobiographical content a step beyond personal memoir. The entries are arranged along the length of the gallery space. Moore's clean and steady script and the drawings that accompany it take on a pattern at a distance. It works visually and that, in itself, is compelling for viewers, whether or not they actually have time to linger and read them in their entirety — a daunting task, as the entries span decades.

In theory, *Making Places* is a portrait of Fleming and Moore. If you could look beyond the physical appearance and even the emotional content portrayed in any straight portrait, whether a painting or photograph, into the inner workings of the mind and its perceptions, you might find something that resembles *Making Places*, at least in spirit. Moore's paintings and Fleming's sculptures are worth viewing in and of themselves, yet there is ample opportunity to single out individual elements of the installation for viewing.

Fleming's sculptures are lacy constructs, weblike networks of curving lines casting intricate shadows. Moore's landscapes, hung above the long scroll of *Auto Biographies*, are minimalist in execution but encompass what is perhaps a car's-eye view of passing terrain.

The artists move back and forth between three studios in three states: California, Nevada, and Colorado. The places of the exhibit's title could refer to their studios and homes but it includes the terrain Moore and Fleming travel between the three states as well. Notions of place are fluid, and *Making Places* is something of a nonlinear map by which locations are connected — not by straight lines from point A to point B but by the artistic expression of moments in time. Moore's landscapes suggest a sense of dislocation. They represent a liminal state between those destinations (the studios) where full bodies of work are created. His paintings could also represent the distance between unrealized projects and their eventual fruition.

Making Places is the third large-scale installation in CCA's Muñoz Waxman Gallery in as many years that takes full advantage of the cavernous space. Though Moore's work is distinct from Fleming's, there are ample expressions of shared experience. You come away from the exhibit with some understanding of the framework of the artists' lives and the history, some shared, some independent, that led them to this moment.