Major exhibition and operating support for SculptureCenter’s programs is generously provided by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts; the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council; the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; Jeanne Donovan Fisher; the Kraus Family Foundation; the Lambent Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation; the A. Woodner Fund; and contributions from our Board of Trustees.

Michael E. Smith: - is presented as part of SculptureCenter’s Artist-in-Residence program and is supported in part by the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation. SculptureCenter’s 2014/15 exhibitions program is underwritten by UOVO Fine Art Storage.

All rights reserved, including rights of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

©SculptureCenter and the authors

Published by SculptureCenter
44-19 Purves Street
Long Island City, NY 11101
 t: 718.361.1750
 f: 718.786.9336
info@sculpture-center.org
www.sculpture-center.org

ISBN: TK

Design: Claudia Brandenburg, Language Arts
Copy Editor: Lucy Flint
Printer: RMI Printing, New York

Cover: Image courtesy the artist.
Emptied out. Stirring to life. Possessed. Propagating. Frozen. These are some of the states induced by Michael E. Smith’s exhibition, where old things are seemingly left to their own devices. Leftover things, extracted from their original mechanism, but with the potential for new life, Smith’s sculptures occupy a moment of transformation. Temporarily suspended between one existence and another, they buzz with the subtle electricity of becoming.

There is the mechanical thrust of a pumping coil, a brief action and jarring sound looped in a video. This stuttering start of the spring offers the promise of unencumbered movement. A black Labrador’s eyes stare unsettlingly through a Big Boy (the overweight restaurant mascot) mask. Only partially disguised, the taxidermy dog head is draped with the skin of the exaggerated human face. Not quite a hybrid, something else has inhabited its interior. A garbage disposal is fitted with a headpiece. Two identical unoccupied sleeping bags are anchored to the floor; face down with the legs floating in the air. Empty and flattened, the sleeping bag takes on a coffin-like form. Nearby, the runners of a rocking chair sit side by side, threatening to gently sway. A vice is fitted with a dried sunflower stalk, holding a banister like a cold and firm hand. A vacant cubbyhole unit is built into an existing alcove. An old bathtub, with Jacuzzi jets, is placed on the floor. A doghouse hangs 18 feet up the courtyard wall. Vacuums of space anticipating resting bodies and parts.

What and who are these vessels for? How much animate and inanimate stuff transitions in and out of them? Reincarnated objects, these sculptures are just about to move on, continually changing and entering into new relationships, sheltering multiple visitors over time. They operate at their own speed; they have their own rhythm. And it is impossible to fully know them.
Installation view, Michael E. Smith: -, SculptureCenter, 2015.
Courtesy the artist and Clifton Benevento, New York. Photo: Jason Mandella
Black Lab, latex mask. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Clifton Benevento, New York. Photo: Jason Mandella
Michael E. Smith: 
Two channel video. 1:45 minutes, loop. Courtesy the artist and Clifton Benevento, New York. Photo: Jason Mandella

"Doghouse. Dimensions variable.Courtesy the artist and Clifton Benevento, New York. Photo: Jason Mandella
Checklist of Works in the Exhibition

Mud Room, 2015
Wood and paint
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Bathtub, springs
70 x 35 x 32 inches

Untitled, 2015
Black Lab, latex mask
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Ceramic plates, steel pipe
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Doghouse
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Dolly, Nintendo Game Cube
26 x 17 x 50 inches

Untitled, 2015
Garbage disposal, headgear
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Garbage disposal, headgear
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Mugs, amplifier, printed twins
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Rocking chair
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Sleeping bag, steel
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Sleeping bag, steel
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Sunflower, steel, vice grip
Dimensions variable

Untitled, 2015
Two channel video
1:45 minutes, loop

All works courtesy the artist and Clifton Benevente, New York

SculptureCenter Board of Trustees
Sascha S. Bauer, Chair
Fred Wilson, President
Danielle Anderman
Candace Barasch
Andreas Beroutsos
Sanford Biggers
James L. Bodner
Carol Bowe
Alen H. Brill
Priscilla Vail Caldwell
Eleanor Cayre
Robert K. Elliott
Libby Ellis
Arline Feinberg
John H. Friedman
Glauco Lolli-Ghetti
Nate McBride
Adam McIwan
Elena M. Paul
Eleanor Propp
Lisa Schiff
Diane Solomon
Elaine G. Weitzen

SculptureCenter Staff
Mary Ceruti, Executive Director and Chief Curator
Ben Whine, Associate Director
Kim Schnaubert, Development Director
Ruba Katrib, Curator
Holly Stanton, Exhibition and Program Manager
Cheryl Chan, Assistant to the Director/Development Assistant
Steven Mayer, Visitor Services and Membership Manager
Valentina Medda, Visitor Engagement Representative
Morgan Edelbrock, Head Installer
Kiersten Lukason, Installer