

## Setting

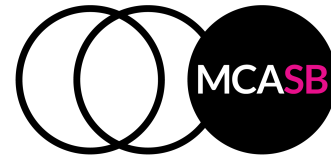
**Lara Favaretto** could be regarded as the continuation of a series of twentieth-century artists whose major concern was questioning the meaning of art, sometimes through play and dark humor. Notwithstanding, as she has stated several times, the artist is not particularly interested in interrogating contemporary art, but rather, in evoking a deep sense of the human condition. Thus, her artistic production—however colored by notes of Abstract Art, Arte Povera, Kinetic Art, Land Art, or Minimal Art—is composed of aspects that in addition to questioning the intellectual status of a piece of art, are also interrelated to our humaneness. Her work is ephemeral, transient, spontaneous, unpredictable, changing, and even vulnerable, like us.

Consequently, the placing of a lost or disposed object inside an exhibition space and its inevitable re-signification goes far beyond the Duchampian gesture of transferring the status of a work of art to a used object. On many and diverse levels, this activity speaks to our human condition, our ordinariness, present paradigms, and built-up universes, eliciting an active response from the audience when relating to these objects. Each viewer is meant to draw from her/his personal compendium of thoughts, experiences, and intimate living context, triggering diverse responses to the questions posed by Favaretto. *Why recover lost or worn-out objects? Does it recall a paradigm of remembrance and safeguarding material objects? Or is it a register of a universe where if something is forgotten or broken it just simply gets replaced? Perhaps both or none?*

On occasion in Favaretto's works, one can experience the artist's enthusiasm to cherish the past, the forgotten, the disregarded—sometimes spiced with a dash of irony. Such a need must be shared by many human beings who have experienced loss, and hope to preserve a particular memory through an object, memorial, poem, song, and so on—all created to be assigned to the past.

Yet, Favaretto's overall oeuvre also questions why certain objects have survived over others, querying their legitimacy in relation to the forgotten, while exposing their inevitable destiny: wear, corrosion, erosion, breakage. The reading between the lines: all things in this world—including us—will not last forever.

Even so, for more than a century now, we have been producing objects made of binding agents (polymers, metals, cement) which though derived from natural materials, have become ageless. We are overcrowding the planet with artifacts that never decompose or take thousands of years to do so. And thus, a philosophical



question arises: *Why produce items that defy the laws of nature and aim to become eternal?*

Permanence is so inelegantly opposite to our temporariness. It is as if for years we have unconsciously been seeking poetic and material devices to succeed us, to become permanent in a natural world where impermanence is the norm. Or perhaps we lack the vision to look beyond our temporal paradigms, and inevitably we fail to comprehend how we are irreversibly inhabiting our world with trash that will last for generations.

Be it the poetic version or the disenchanting one, Favaretto's selection (books, car wash brushes, furniture, images, paintings, suitcases) represents an insignificant amount compared to the hundreds of thousands of similar objects that meet a destiny of disposal. Thus, Favaretto's work connects with historical, social, ecological, even ethical concerns that sooner or later will reach out to a particular audience, in our present, near future, or perhaps in 100-year's time.

Through its materiality or lack of it, her work also embraces a plethora of dichotomies which speak to our human condition and exemplify our binary nature: manifestation/dissipation, memory/oblivion, movement/stasis, noise/silence, reproducibility/uniqueness, vulnerability/resiliency, perpetuity/impermanence, shaping/deforming, creating/destroying.

In her work, the organic materials such as dirt, paper, wool, or wood, together with the evanescent ones such as air, steam, sound, and electricity, and the long-lasting ones such as concrete, metal, precious metals, and plastics, remind us that no matter how hard we try to overcome our temporal nature, no matter how many things we create to transcend, or how many inventions are made to endure, we will always be perishable, organic, oxidable. We may seek to endure yet we are meant to disappear, which depending on perspective, might be as beautiful as a sand dune being eroded by the gentle air.

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