

Lorna Bauer

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How do you tend to summarize your practice when asked?

It depends who asks – art is embarrassing right? – it's always situational and I interface differently depending on the context. If the question comes from someone with a working knowledge assuming a position within the field of art – I don't underestimate "typepeople" nor put much value on hierarchies of knowledge or cultural authority – I tend to summarize some of my conceptual pivot points: researching ecologies or lived space and history of 20th century material culture. If the question comes from someone like a family member or my neighbour for example who possess a less specialized knowledge of art, they gravitate to the thing – so I appeal to a more fundamental and medium based framework for explaining things: I make photography, sculpture, glass objects etc. Usually no matter what, a conversation unfolds in unexpected ways that is always surprising. My neighbours sometimes bring me broken glass objects thinking I can fix them because they know I work in glass. Unfortunately, I can't always fulfill their expectations as the neighbourhood glass artist, because it's just not like that.



The idlers, 2018, hand blown glass, woven copper mesh, dimensions variable. Installation view, *Tool for idlers*, Galerie Nicolas Robert, 2018. Courtesy the artist and Nicolas Robert Gallery. Photo: Jean-Michael Seminaro

What projects are currently on the go?

During the pandemic, I have been working out ways to make the windows of our house a kind of aperture for indexical moments and traces of everyday activity, placing photopaper under our two skylights. I wanted these works to begin to form a picture of a specific place and time, a portrait of a house, looking inward and outward, the house itself becoming a camera. So I am expanding the space of the studio a bit more these days, and also spending a lot of time thinking about art and victory gardens, economy, which in the Greek etymology of the word means "household". We keep talking about reviving the economy during this pandemic, but can we talk about universal income and what it means to uphold a household?



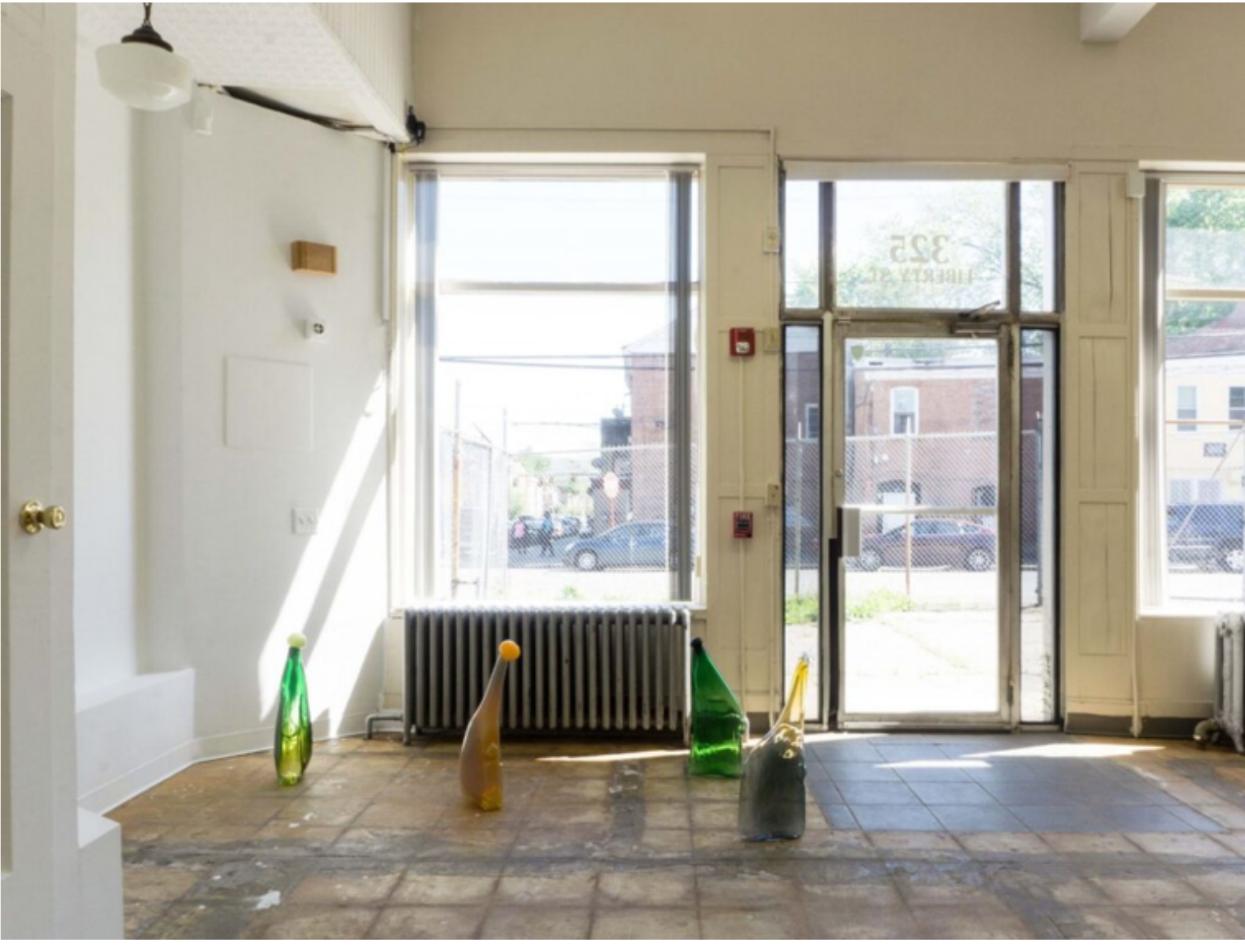
(left) *Silo Bottle #2*, 2018, mold and hand blown glass, hand blown glass stopper, 58.5cm x 23cm x 11.5cm. Installation view *May West*, Vicki, Newburgh, New York, 2019. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Nicolas Robert. Photo: Samuel Boehm. (right) *Silo Bottle #4*, 2019, mold and hand blown glass, hand blown glass stopper, 81cm x 23cm x 15cm. Installation view *May West*, Vicki, Newburgh, New York, 2019. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Nicolas Robert. Photo: Samuel Boehm.

The past several months have been destabilizing on a number of levels. What impact has it had on your thinking and practice? Have the questions you ask in the studio shifted?

I would say yes, but it is still so difficult to answer. Thinking about the "longue durée" of time it seems like this pandemic has dramatically shifted things away from the notion of plural temporalities within a historical trajectory to something very mono or uni-temporal, or universal. I am not sure how this will change artmaking but it has perhaps helped refocus attention to more proximate or immediate experiences and stories. Hopefully, these last few months will have been instructive for trying to instill correctives within the culture.

Do you have predictions for ways that the pandemic will alter the art world for the foreseeable future? Any potential positive outcomes? Both positively and adversely?

I suspect we will be stuck spending a lot of time worrying about logistics for the unforeseeable future. Time for daydreaming or other things considered a frivolity might lose some traction, sadly, as safety measures loosen and people start to feel the need to get back to "normal". My sense is that the re-emergence of the traditional P & S categories might present itself with greater urgency as the marketplace tries to adapt and re-affirm its values. This is usually what happens during a crisis: Painting and Sculpture gain renewed power. I'm inspired about Black Lives Matter and what this will mean for the cultural sphere in terms of programming and opportunity.



Silo Bottles, 2018-2019, mold and hand blown glass, hand blown glass stoppers, variable dimensions. Installation view *May West*, Vicki, Newburgh, New York, 2019. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Nicolas Robert. Photo: Samuel Boehm

What are your three favourite websites?

I kind of stopped surfing the net about 9 months ago when I had a baby, I don't have time at the moment to look at sites.

What is influencing your work now?

My family but also not my family, in other words, my sense of time and attention.

What is your process typically like? Has it changed?

Its research driven, but more than anything, its very much a process of trial and error. The more tangible, and material, the more trial and error is involved in executing ideas and resolving intention and outcome. My mind's eye is shrewd so not much gets out of the studio.



The Hand of Mee and the Moonflower Version #3, 2019, five hand blown vessels in stainless steel butcher gloves, cast glass, slumped glass, various quartz crystal balls on plaster base, 132cm x 162.5cm x 10cm. Installation view, *Somebody*, MKG127 Gallery, Toronto, 2019. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Nicolas Robert.

What do you enjoy the most, the procedure or the result?

I am rarely disappointed with what gets out in the world and "has legs", and I spend a great deal reflecting on past projects, looking at old negatives and working it out with the scanner and software, so procedure and result is complicated and hard to describe. Procedure and result is different for photographers.

Will the role of the artist change in the 'new normal'?

I hope and cross my fingers there are lots of really interesting make-work opportunities for artists, much in the way that there was as part of the Marshall Plan, which had a lasting impact on post-war culture. What I am not so keen on is the resurgence of web art, which I find can be a simple-minded approach to complex problems. This proved to be a failure in the 90s, so why rehash this again?



Cadmium Abode, 2018, Slumped spectrum glass on walnut and metal shelf, 91.5cm x 122cm x 14.5cm. Installation view, *The Hand of Mee*, Franz Kaka Gallery, 2018. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Nicolas Robert. Photo: Jimmy Limit.

What is your favourite place in the world?

In my vegetable garden.

Do you have access to your previous studio space? What type of space do you work in and does it impact your practice?

Yes. It's the same but different. My studio is in my house, it takes-up the basement and a garage.

What is the relationship between your chosen medium and your subject matter?

I have answered this differently in the past. Earlier projects were very much focused on medium specificities of photography, but I have loosened the terms of what this would mean, now more than ever. I am interested in the slipperiness of document and documentation of a place, but I do not aim for an objective utterance of visual truth as other photographers claim. I aim for something far more complicated, emotional, visually complex. My other modes of working, in sculptural terms is quite disparate and based on a range of criteria, mostly centered on facture and experience and aesthetics, and volume, and space etc.



(left) *The Silent Hum*, 2020, Copper, bronze, leather, brass grommets, hand dyed rope, Miracle-Gro patina™. Installation view, *Do you like worms?* Gazebo, Delaware, 2020. Photo: Samuel Boehm

(right) *The Bell (detail)*, 2020, Copper, bronze, hand dyed rope, Miracle-Gro patina™, 104cm x 8.3cm. Installation view, *Do you like worms?* Gazebo, Delaware, 2020. Photo: Samuel Boehm.

What is the role of the viewer in your work?

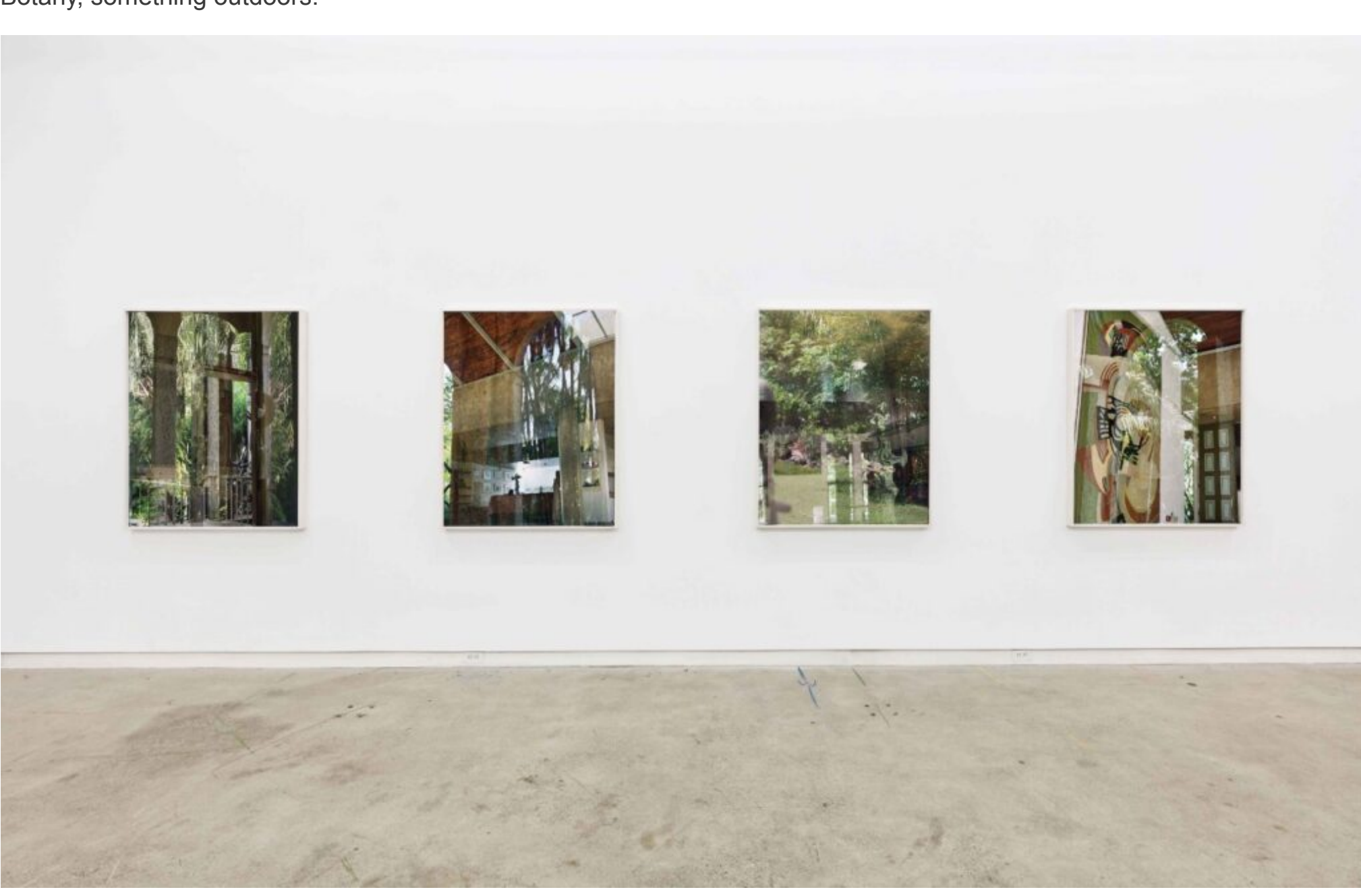
They are not always my principal focus that's for sure, but I appreciate the reception and discussion that viewers bring to the work. I am grateful for that exchange because it always suggests that my subject position is not central when we talk about intention or meaning making. I still reserve the right to reject the reading of a viewer, if necessary.

What are you reading right now? Listening to? Watching?

I am reading about Derek Jarman and Moya Davey's new book *Index Cards*.

If you weren't an artist, what might you be doing instead?

Botany, something outdoors.



Silo Roberto Burle Marx #1 - #4, 2018, Archival pigment prints, 127 x 101.6 cm (each). Installation view, *Wild Inside*, Clint Roenisch Gallery, Toronto, 2018.

To see more of Lorna's work, please visit <http://www.lornabauer.com/>