

Andrew Liversidge
PROOF OF WORK
44 Glasshouse Rd,
Collingwood, Victoria.
6 Sept – 5 Oct 2019

In an exhibition titled PROOF OF WORK at Gertrude Glasshouse in Melbourne, Australia, the artist Andrew Liversidge has produced five objects for display.

Five metal cubes.

The cubes appear more or less the same with the only difference being an incremental shift in scale.

The cubes were produced by melting Australian one dollar coins into a molten liquid that was then cast into moulds. A thousand dollar coins were melted to produce the first cube. Two thousand dollar coins were melted to produce the second. Three thousand for the third, four thousand for the fourth and five thousand for the fifth. The resulting sculptures range in dimension from 11.4cm³ to 19.4cm³. All of them are somewhere between bronze-ish and dirty gold in colour and the flat, geometric surfaces are stippled with various imperfections.

The cubes are presented in a straight line, in the middle of the gallery floor. They are titled 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

This is the art people have come to see in the exhibition PROOF OF WORK.

Some may be drawn to the five objects on a purely formal level, intrigued and seduced by the evident discipline of reduction, repetition, material continuity, clarity and control.

Sooner or later they will learn that the bronze-ish, dirty gold looking material is actually an alloy of 2% nickel, 6% aluminium and 92% copper: Australian one dollar coins.

This information may solidify into an annoying, tedious distraction for the strict formalist.

For others it could be a welcome entry point into what at first appeared to be a hostile, impenetrable display of staunch minimalism.

With this information comes a new perspective on scale. The bigger the cube, the more coins melted. The more coins melted, the more money destroyed.

Those that find themselves excited by the brazen destruction of currency, the contemptuous wasting of monetary value, may well be experiencing a tingling of masochistic joy.

Others still may point out that the apparent degradation is dubious in that the monetary value of the coins has merely been transferred into art objects. One may speculate that the dollar value has actually increased. That the project clearly demonstrates an upgrade in scarcity: a defining characteristic of both money and art.

Perhaps this point would spark a conversation about value itself. What exactly is it? How is it created? And why? Can it be stored, exchanged and manipulated and if so who wins and who loses?

Perhaps consensus, civil compliance, social contracts, instability and fungibility would be mentioned. Art as commodity would most likely come up.

An argument may even breakout between those espousing differing views on economics, free markets, systems of control, individual sovereignty and the role of the state.

These reactions may occur one by one, simultaneously or simply not at all.

The only sure thing is aesthetics.

Fatigued by the infinite loop of subjectivity, and much like both the art in PROOF OF WORK and the artist himself, the weary formalist may find themselves reclining at the bar, forming an impossibly straight slouch.

Rob McLeish
2019