

ROBERT LARSON

b. 1968, Santa Cruz, CA

Lives and works in Santa Cruz, CA

Larson's interdisciplinary practice embraces immersive, experiential relationships with material and landscape coupled with studio production. Larson equates the act of moving the body through the landscape and the act of bending to pick things up as a kind of in-situ action painting. The gestures of walking, seeking, finding, bending, picking up, toting, transporting, gathering, sorting, placing, cutting, arranging, and affixing are repeated for hours, days and weeks on end, akin to ritualistic dedication. Larson walks miles and miles of streets to gather found materials, a practice he has maintained for over twenty years—a journey of epic proportions, resulting in works of iconic and poetic significance.

In his studio, the gathered objects are sorted by category and brands into large stockpiles of content, which originally was worthless trash that now gains power in its excess and archive. The once pristine cigarette packaging take on their own personality and historical record by being discarded, stepped on, crumpled or torn; this history of the objects is embedded in Larson's works. The items that Larson collects are often gleaned from impoverished or industrial neighborhoods, emphasizing concepts of toil and labor for the sake of small pleasures, albeit potentially deadly ones. The result is richly textured, visually meticulous and venerable works that hint at sacred geometry, further emphasizing the vicious yet bittersweet cycle where commodification meets addiction.

Larson's scavenging, gathering and re-appropriating process is true to the found object aesthetic, following in the path of historical predecessors such as Ed Kienholz, Kurt Schwitters, and Robert Rauschenberg. His approach to art-making remarks upon socio-political concerns, as well as psychogeography and searching for the American Dream. Similar to Mark Bradford, Larson's dedication to material becomes a mapping of experience that reconfigures geography as objects of memory, hope and desire.

Larson's work has been exhibited at The Carl Cherry Center for the Arts in Carmel, CA, Tannery Arts Center in Santa Cruz, CA, Eyebuzz Fine Art in Tarrytown, NY, Elouise Pickard Smith Gallery at UC Santa Cruz, Coachella Valley Art Center in Indio, CA, SFMOMA Artists Gallery, and the Kala Arts Institute. Larson is the recipient of both the Rydell Visual Arts Fellowship and the Tom Allen Painting Scholarship. His work has been featured in Hyperallergic, the Droste Effect, Beautiful Decay, Design Milk and Wall Street International and in 2014 Larson was named one of 13 Artists to Watch at Volta NY by Arts Observer. Larson is currently represented by CES Gallery in Los Angeles and Joshua Liner Gallery in New York. Larson attended Cabrillo College in Aptos, CA and California College of the Arts in Oakland, CA; he currently lives and works in Santa Cruz, CA.