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# ARTFORUM

Jason Dodge  
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Jason Dodge, A permanently open window. Photo: C. Dario Lasagni.

Jason Dodge's first permanent installation is located in the tower of a former MaxMara electrical factory, adjacent to the Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia, Italy. A permanently open window consists of a window that is perpetually ajar, two cedar doors, and a sculpture titled Alphabet. Dodge is known for works that poetically defy everyday perception, and here he discusses the specificities of transforming this window into a "beacon."

FUNDAMENTALLY, I'm interested in abstraction, and presence. I was thinking about how I wanted to make an abstract body that is not obviously detectable but could potentially be present in exhibitions on a molecular level, an alphabet. Much of my work concentrates on the notion of how something means something as opposed to what something means, and this flexibility of perception drives the way a work is seen and experienced. I'm not dictating how it is experienced; I'm just dictating a realm of possible situations based on what is perceived.

A permanently open window began several years ago. I was considering the site of the work, the warehouse, as a place where Luigi Maramotti played as a child. I had a thought about making a beacon that could somehow be rooted in a memory of a place that someone has known for their entire life—a place that has been renovated and repurposed. I was interested in working with the tower, but also with the notion of air going through the window, and so I made, in a sense, a window that's open forever—since it's described as being permanently open. It blocks the building from being repurposed again.

If you were to visit the window, a staff member would give you a key and walk you over. Then you would open the door and go into the tower if you wanted. When you see the work from the outside, however, you don't get the sense of it being even remotely accessible. You really get the sense that it's not an accessible window — it has a reticent distance. It's not a light leading you home or something like that; it's not a window that seems to be open for a reason.

Yet once you're inside, the work questions what it means to see something that changes depending on what time of day it is, what the weather's like, what time of year it is, and so on. I'm interested in that movement of perception in terms of abstraction, but also I think it's important to be able to recognize what something is. If you went in and there were a bird in there, which there very well could be, it would change the whole thing. The Maramotti staff agreed not to put any kind of netting or anything like that to keep animals from going in. It has to just be what it is.

I am not interested in overtly mystical or spiritual notions. I think there is just something about presence, though. The core of my interest in most of the art I look at, which is mostly centuries or millennia old, stems from the fact that the people making it didn't necessarily care about the subject, which was already decided. And yet such art can tell you so much about presence, says something about what it means to be a human, what it means to be alive.

— As told to Lauren O'Neill-Butler