

This-is-how-to_

A step-by-step guide to the assemblages of Katerina Zafiropoulou

Step 1

This-is-how-to-do-it: Tutorials, detailed maps, easy instructions. With simple moves from start to finish, the principles of DIY encourage self-reliance in completing activities as the antidote to readymade objects and experience and to the unique skill of each expert.

Ultimately, however, how much initiative does a guided construction afford? What freedom does the effort to achieve a predetermined outcome allow to creativity, to alternative courses, to spontaneous moves or even to errors?

Step 2

Dada: Bringing this question into the reality of art, Katerina Zafiropoulou opens the packages of wooden constructions, puts the instructions aside and keeps just the materials. The invitation/challenge of assembling is no longer linked to the sequence of a guide's steps, focusing more on the imaginary dimension of the world of play—a realm of perception and invention, of experiential interaction and autonomy, of rules and randomness. In a Dada spirit, Zafiropoulou opts for improvisation and undermines elements like intention and control. The final outcome as predetermined by the photograph on the packaging is rejected; what matters more is to redefine the purpose, the value of the process as a journey and the assembly on terms that are irrational, different, beyond the predetermined purpose.

Step 3

Cut outs: In the studio, the parts of the construction—pre-cut into wooden panels and numbered to indicate how they are to be joined—come out of their cartons, are redistributed and laid out on the counters by type, size and shape. The individual pieces, whose features are meant to facilitate their assembly, lose this functionality; instead, they acquire the identity of artistic materials and reflect a new commitment to the artist's inventiveness.

Step 4

Assembly: Created after a long manual involvement and attesting to both an attention to technical detail and an openness to resourcefulness, the assemblages of Zafiropoulou reveal the traits of constructivist "architectural" structures as well as the unlimited and labyrinthine potential of collage in joining fragments together. At the same time they encompass the notions of surrealism's readymade and found objects: their pieces, mass-produced industrial objects appropriated by Zafiropoulou, are taken away from the context of their automated production to be used in imaginative and resourceful ways in each new creation.

Step 5

Without an end: At the same time, as their installation in space adopts the same sense of freedom, the assemblages of Zafiropoulou reflect this intention to be approached not as artworks with a clearly defined content and form but as a mentally moving and potentially ongoing creation. As objects that remain always open to reading and make

their 'waiting' connections available for use—as unique forms, "toys" or decorative objects or hybrid constructions which permit anything—they are viewed as either self-contained creations or as a fluid visual environment whose continuity is to be found in the discontinuity of its constituent parts. Open to contrasts—regular and chaotic, complicatedly dense and geometrically simple—the constructions of Zafiropoulou fill the gaze in precisely the same way as they fill the space: step-by-step, cohesively and elaborately, and perfection is not their aim but nor is it an aimless end, either.

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