

Nick Hornby Artist's Statement

This project brings together a series of three objects: a prop from a star wars film recreated in plaster; a Victorian table leg, turned by mis-using a VW Polo as a lathe, and a section of a BOEING 747: As sculptures placed on the plinth, they evoke the art of the 1980's or of early 20th century modernism, but do so only as the by-products of a convoluted practice of research and making.

In Mythologies, Roland Barthes set up a dichotomy between the abstract - the "superlative object" with its "perfection and absence of origin", which looks as though it has "fallen from the sky", and its opposite: "the technical and typically human operation of assembling".

This series of objects forces those dichotomous ideas of assembly and autonomous objecthood into an awkward dance: the abstraction here is an accident of construction, the whole is only a part. A cross section of the overhead luggage locker of a passenger jet mimics the integrity of 20th century abstract shape making.

Star Wars is a charade of completeness: computer graphics, model-making, and live action stitched together in the edit to create a seamless, transcendent reality. By casting the prop in plaster, by isolating and repeating the video, the seams of this reality are unpicked, the whole disintegrates into its constituent parts, only to reform again, as the video begins, and the spiral turns.

A turned table leg is presented and re-presented in the space: now above, and now below the plinth; first held aloft as object and icon, then – literally – put back in its place, recalling Brancusi's Bird In Space, that ultimate example of Barthes's "perfection and absence of origin" and simultaneously mimicking the visible and prized craftsmanship of the Victorian furniture maker.

The objects are surrounded by, and the viewer teased by, these competing versions of their own histories: an immiscible series of provenances, explanations, and origins, in diagrams, repetitions, stills and video, which overlap and contradict one another, conflating origin and destination, process and product.

These are miscreant objects, misquotations, creating abstraction out of utility, disguising craftsmanship within mechanism, art history within the instruction manual, and pitching the integrity of objecthood against process and play and hazard.