

ARTFORUM

DOVE BRADSHAW

"Poetry is everywhere evident," Dove Bradshaw once said, which leads one to wonder what was poetic about the works in "Unintended Consequences"--a presentation of eight abstract sculptures, all from 2015-16, and eleven linen canvases, all covered with silver and liver of sulfur, and most from 2015. The works on view had an Abstract Expressionist look: they seemed intensely, even wildly, expressive, fraught with energy, beside themselves with excitement, dramatically restless. Yes this effect was deceptive--the sculptures are in fact assisted ready-



mades. To create these works, Bradshaw first collected spent bullets, all warped and deformed from the force of impact, and made 3-D scans of them. Then she "printed" the bullets out at roughly thirty times their original size, and finally patinated the "blown-up" objects in rubber or in various metals. Placed on pedestals and glittering in the gallery lights, these found abstractions are the dazzling keepsakes of a fired gun: the aftermath of violence--of destruction--in seductive form.

The paintings, meanwhile, continue a mode of artmaking Bradshaw began in 1984, when she first applied liver of sulfur to silver. In these refulgent works, the sulfur (a chemical typically used in metalwork to form a patina) appears to have burned the silver leaf, leaving streaks of black--dark marks that emphasize the ever-present strain of destruct-iveness in her work, the death-inflected or even death-infected. Unlike the AbEx painter heroically revealing his or her inner self, Bradshaw is more like an alchemist. She sets in motion a transformation--a chain reaction--whose particular final shape she can't

anticipate. The results are entropic, unpredictable, marked with chaos, at once geological and otherworldly, like the volcanic surface of a distant planet.

Bradshaw has long been a follower of Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, and Merce Cunningham: Her first work, *Plain Air*, 1969, was an homage to Duchamp; she became an Artistic Adviser to the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1984; and she collaborated with Cage. She leaves the work in a productive limbo, the difference between art and found object or material seemingly permanently blurred and arbitrary.

So is that "poetry?" Are Bradshaw's mind-teasing and eye-provoking Dada-esque works "poems?" Her work is certainly tinged with a certain Romantic sensibility. At Sandra Gering Inc. in New York, a simultaneous presentation of Bradshaw's work focused on her "Angles," a series she has been working on since 2000. Each of these works is created on a triangular ground, and features a painted triangle that parameters--a triangle within a triangle--Bradshaw finds significant room for variation. She employs materials such as wax, oil, gesso, plaster, wood, and linen, and uses an expansive palette to create a wide range of effects. She also orients the works on the wall in different ways, and changes their position during a show's run. She plays God--even if God, unlike Bradshaw, left nothing to chance. Nature, she seems to tell us, can and cannot be controlled: it follows a predictable if eccentric course.

Donald Kuspit, Bradshaw, Artforum, May, 2016