

Rosa Aiello and Patricia L. Boyd, Joins, Cell Project Space, London, U.K.

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Patricia L. Boyd

← *Aeron Armrest I-XII*, detail, 2019.

Photo : Rob Harris, courtesy of Cell Project Space

Rosa Aiello

← *Untitled (Blasey Ford)*, 2019.

Photo : Rob Harris, courtesy of Cell Project Space

Patricia L. Boyd

↑ *Men Assembling: 12/10/2019, 23:55:00-12/11/2019, 00:06:48, Channel 4 Television*, 2013-2019.

Photo : Rob Harris, courtesy of Cell Project Space

Rosa Aiello and Patricia L. Boyd

Joins

It's familiar, the voice that you hear immediately as you walk into *Joins*, a two-person exhibition by Canadian artist Rosa Aiello and British artist Patricia L. Boyd. "Joins" is both a verb (to connect, attach, combine, bond, etc.) and a noun (the places or lines where two or more things are connected or fastened together). Joins can be seamless, but they can also jar, jostle, make us aware of their making. And to what ends? A join—to join—is to ask how things fit together, and how we notice this, or don't.

"Up the stairs," the familiar voice says, as I walk across the threshold and enter the exhibition: welcoming me to the space, *inducting* me, perhaps, activating my presence. The room knows I am here, and now I do too. But it is not a command. It is a recollection. This is an eight-second audio work by Aiello, a brief capture of Christine Blasey Ford's recent testimony before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, where she spoke about her teenaged sexual assault by the recently appointed Supreme Court Judge, Brett Kavanaugh. Phrases that hint at details of Blasey Ford's experience run across the bottom of a series of eleven photographs by Aiello, which show a monochrome winter suburb as seen in motion from a nearby highway. The language in *Untitled (Blasey Ford)* (2019) is precise and recognizable, but also abstracted ("one person goes to the bathroom, one person follows them"), and could be reconfigured to represent any number of encounters: a hint at the insidious, often sinister contents of seemingly banal domestic spaces, shaped and produced by the standardized mechanisms of capital that erect them.

Indeed, spaces that we think are empty are often full, fulsome, overflowing with that which wishes to remain hidden, that which obscures itself in a language of absence or neutrality. This notion is reconstituted in sculptural form in Boyd's *Aeron Armrest I-XII* (2019) and *Absorption, Elimination: Technics SL-1200MK2 (CCA Wattis, 10/12/17-02/24/18)*

(2017-2018). Both works are casts of corporate cast-offs: a Herman Miller Aeron Chair and a Technics turntable sold in liquidation auctions of Bay Area technology companies. With used restaurant grease, flecked with mottled wax and resin, Boyd casts the internal weight of the record player and the inside of the arm chair—exercises in negative space that reveal idiosyncratic textures and details, the works are at once recognizable and gnomic, recessed into the wall like a grid of waxy talismanic relics. Nearby, a video work by Boyd, *Men Assembling: 12/10/2019, 23:55:00-12/11/2019, 00:06:48, Channel 4 Television* (2013-2019) splices together the TV shows that aired before and after her commissioned artist film screened on Channel 4 in 2013. In an adjoining space, another short audio work by Aiello, *Rapid Transit* (2017-2019) plays every fifteen minutes, filling the exhibition space with the rushing screech of a train. In *Joins*, everything is connected, we are surrounded by forces that act upon us and inform every moment, even if we cannot see or hear them. But take a moment, the artists deftly propose, and you will.

Emily LaBarge

Cell Project Space, London, U.K.

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