

Maryland Federation of Art

Juror's Statement: This is Small

November 28, 2014

By Marcus Civin

Two eggs is a small thing. A light switch is a small thing. A backpack is a small thing. A stack of chairs is a small thing. A couple of oil barrels is a small thing. A concert is a small thing. Aging is a small thing. Evil is a small thing. Sex is a small thing. Lying and saying everything's great, that's a small thing. Moss, a shot of whiskey, a tree. Small. Citrus canker is small; buffaloes are small.

A prescription is a small thing. This jar of nails. This balloon. This gauze. This town. This dung. This flat. This, if it were a eulogy. Small. This broken dish. You know, this truck.

This spinning top. That tremor. This smudge. This horizon, or hair. These brushstrokes. This stomach trouble. This jewel. This family tradition. This dress, corduroy. This cow, bleeding. The country.

The committees. The swivel. The chair. The security officer's uniform. The candles. The cup. Broom and dustpan. The side of the mountain. The mountain. The massive boats loading cargo. The golfer. Small. That bright courtyard, that was a small prison. This roof is small pieces of scrap wood for stacking up into a tall column, a column up to the fourth floor.

An artist named Sarah Eargle is up there, floating some. For now she tears out small moments and assembles those moments as a sequence of plastic rollings and musical instruments intermixed, as shiny cut-out flourish tabs, funny sad sexy nubbins, a net over an underwear scrunch. Eargle would rather group what might be tough minty grass and odd wooden punctuation marks than make some grand statement. I found her sitting in a chair with two potato-like wooden pebbles frozen in a pink-orange rectangle. When she looked up from the pink-orange rectangle, the two pebbles sunk fully off into a lapping of hazy blue.

What is small? I decided to ask Sarah a few questions.

Marcus Civin: Hey, Sarah, what is a mountain?

Sarah Eargle: Sometimes big, sometimes small, a mound, a burial mound, a landfill.

MC: One egg or two?

SE: Two, definitely.

MC: What is small?

SE: Time.

MC: What does it feel like to tear up/tear down/pull apart a painting you made?

SE: Necessary.

MC: Why is that piece of wood in your hand more important than any other piece of wood in the world?

SE. Someone threw it away.

MC: If you could blow air into anything, what would you blow air into?

SE: The lungs of my dying brother.

MC: If you could blow something up—explode it—what would you do that to...?

SE: A set of heirloom china. And then I would put it all back together again.