

Dora Economou
A Modern Hug

Dora Economou's work composes an enigmatic manual of objects and images; a manual exploring their mechanisms of production as well as function; their relation to other objects and images, existing or potential. Her work poses the questions What are they? Where do they come from? How do they work? and answers them by suggesting tangible scenarios.

The title *A Modern Hug* outlines essential elements of the artist's research and practice. 'A' indicates the singularity of each work and its position in a continuous line of production. Moreover, 'A', as an indefinite article, does not circumscribe the work's identity and permits multiple connotations. 'Modern' acknowledges the revolutionary outlook and formal radicalness of the vanguard movements of the 20th century. Furthermore, it alludes to the disclosure of materials, to the use and reference of industrial products. 'Hug' denotes the works' scale in proportion to the body and the tool. It also signifies the physicality and subjectivity involved in the process which expands the 'Modern' industrialized and standardized forms of mass production. *A Modern Hug* is a complex and graceful embrace of objecthood.

Dora Economou assembles, fragments, alters, and displays common industrial materials, found objects and images. Being a sculptor trained as painter, her works deal with matter as representation, with form as process, and with space as stage. The final form is abstract or often an inexact replica of massively produced objects. A prototype of something that is not unique, a facsimile of something that does not exist, or something new made out of something old raise ontological questions; reflect on materiality and immateriality, on substance and flux. This imitation of imitation, which according to Plato is twice removed from the truth, produces fake fakes which become originals. The process of repetition and the production through consecutive reproductions is an approach to the source, to the initial gesture. Dora Economou's work operates by revealing the qualities of its components. What is at stake is neither the craftsmanship nor the use of the readymade, it is the interpretation of the act of seeing and making, the reinvention of a function. This inverted, self-reflective, almost counter-productive production process questions the use value of labor and leisure products, the artist and the viewer both as producers and consumers.

Dora Economou's work establishes a distance from the familiar object, image, environment and re-appropriates it as something else. It accomplishes a poetic rehabilitation as it shifts to another possible shape or purpose which things could have if they were not as they are, if they did not do what they actually do. But this is not only fiction; it happens as objects, images, and places evolve, become obsolete, even die. It happens when we try to figure out objects of ancient or foreign civilizations that do not circulate anymore or do not belong to our world at hand. *The eye exist in the savage state*, writes André Breton. In Dora Economou's work what you see is not predefined, it is suspended, contradicted by a deep sense of black humor expressed with gentleness; it is challenged and, thus, challenging.

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