

This is Love – Second Manifesto of The Museum of Everyday Life

The Museum of Everyday Life lives inside each of us, a vast and echoing cabinet of curiosities, every minute of every day filling our endless drawers and cases with new additions to the permanent collection.

A simple household match hums with danger and hope. When we strike it, for a moment we hold between finger and thumb the Promethean gift of Possibility. Each match is a tiny revolution, a promise of radical transformation.

The match reminds us that all objects in some way come from the human body. Not only does the design of the match accommodate the requirements of the thumb and forefinger which must be able to grasp it, **AND** the shapes of cup handles and bowls mirror the human hand, **BUT** also the bowl and the cup and the match echo the shape of human hunger and thirst, the body's need for heat, the eye's requirement for light in order to see. Every object in our museum of everyday life speaks to the body amplifying, extending it, the way an echo in a deep canyon empowers a whisper. Belying their status of apparent insignificance, these humble, mundane things toil away endlessly to unburden us of the vast problematic contingencies of the body.

Sentience is our great burden and our great gift.

We are self aware so we know what we know about living inside a body: that it is constantly changing, one minute it's thirsty, the next minute needing food, it has aches and pains, it farts and belches, it can carry us places, experience ecstasy, sleep and wake from sleep, but despite all of these abilities it is never large enough, permanent enough or beautiful enough to satisfy our sense of self.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a **characterist** is either one who depicts a character in a play or one who employs magical symbols.

Institutional museums, so odiously bound up with the task of reflecting state power or articulating national identity, are holy, sanctified, unapproachable places trafficking in arbitrated, mediated experience.

The Museum of Everyday Life is the opposite of the institutional museum.

The Museum of Everyday Life is a **characterist**, who carries her possessions on her back, inhabits temporary spaces, is always on the move.

Just as the bowl and the cup handle and the match are shaped by the demands and needs of the body **SO ALSO** do the objects in the **Museum of Everyday Life** record our attention and ministrations. The upholstery on the arm of a couch is worn smooth by caressing elbows, the chipped corner of a laquered box is carefully glued back into place, a favorite wallet is creased and cracked by being opened and closed countless times. These things bear the proof of the lives we have led, the things we have done. They remember us. Because our bodies are not large enough or beautiful enough or permanent enough. Feelings come and go. And we are lonely.

A gift from a lover, a family heirloom. A note, a paperclip, a pocket knife, a picture frame: in the museum of everyday life a million invisible threads are tied to our fingers, ears, lips, and eyes, which are tied to every object, which are tied to the lips, ears, fingers, eyes and hearts of other people. The web is invisible. The object is seen, can be picked up, and cradled.

This is real: the shiver we feel when we see a staircase in an old building worn soft in the middle, the proof of thousands of climbings and descents. This is love, the way the object holds evidence of us in itself, forever.

This is love: the infinite, obscure collection of the Museum of Everyday Life, whispering its secret knowledge to our bodies, offering its compassionate affordances to the fragile breast, the hungry belly, to the aching, sentient heart.