

Interview

“Marc Hundley Puts the Dic in Dictionary” Ken Miller, Interview. May 20 2011. Print and Online. <https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/marc-hundley-art-since-summer-of-69>

Marc Hundley Puts the Dic in Dictionary

A few months back, Marc Hundley figured he was having a bad year. He had broken up with his long-term boyfriend, and his identical twin brother (and roommate) had been deported. So Hundley did what any reasonable person would do in that grim situation: he poured himself a stiff drink and sat down to read the dictionary. “The dictionary I generally use has small illustrations for some of the words,” Hundley says. “I’ve been attracted to a lot of these images while looking through the dictionary. I suppose, [feeling lonely and] longing to be sexual, I focused on the images that I could sexualize easily.” The result of this unusual linguistic fetish is Dictionary, a small paperback inspired by classic schoolbooks. Though the skinny volume is filled with page after page of dirty puns, the result is surprisingly subtle, funny and heartfelt.

“The word attached to the illustration wouldn’t seem sexual at first, or most of the time,” Hundley says. “I found that the words could be perverted in a lot of cases: ‘bighorn’ or ‘sperm whale’ are obvious while ‘mouth’, ‘berth’ or ‘cot’ have a more romantic story line.” Keeping the theme subtle was actually trickier than going for the obvious gag. “I edited images out that seemed to already be in it,” Hundley says. “For example, not putting in every snake...”

Dictionary is also Hundley’s debut exhibition with New York project space Art Since the Summer of 1969. A carpenter by trade, Hundley is building a table and benches to convert the gallery space into a small reading room. Hundley says, “I like to make things that function. Making posters, paintings, T-shirts—I’d like the object to say something without being too much about the object or material, because I fear if the vehicle for the expression is too precious you won’t believe me.” And if you can’t trust the working definitions that you find in the dictionary, what can you trust?