

The Milk Bottle Reliquary

by Fred Truck

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The Milk Bottle Reliquary is my response to the tendency, begun in the 20th century, for artists aspiring to greatness to have a museum dedicated solely, or mostly, to their own work.

Marcel Duchamp began this movement, but on a more modest scale than it is now practiced. As the 20th Century rolled on, Picasso had his museum, Donald Judd had a whole city, Marfa, Texas, and Warhol had his museum in Pittsburgh, PA.

There are three artist's museums I want to discuss briefly because I want to lay out the context the Reliquary sprang from.

Boite en Valise by Marcel Duchamp made his museum in 1940 or so. It is through miniaturization of his works that Duchamp was able to achieve such compactness. 69 works are included.



The edition shown here is a reproduction of the 1968 G (for green) edition, which was made under the auspices of The Association Marcel Duchamp by Matthieu Mercier. There were several editions made of this famous work. It was produced by various artists and craftspersons up until Duchamp died in 1968. It was a publication.

Claes Oldenburg built the Mouse Museum and installed it in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 1979. The Mouse Museum took its name from Oldenburg's sculpture series, Geometric Mouse, a somewhat disguised recreation of Mickey Mouse. The Mouse Museum is attended by the Ray Gun

Wing. Oldenburg displayed his collection of ray gun shaped objects there. The Mouse Museum houses his collection of kitsch and Americana.

In 2013, the Mouse Museum and the Ray Gun Wing were shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.



Finally, the other artists' museum I have had experience with is the different editions of Flux Boxes, made by George Maciunas. These boxes were expertly crafted by Maciunas, but their contents

were usually supplied by members of the Fluxus group, which included at Yoko Ono, George Brecht, Robert Watts and many other artists. Additionally, the contents varied from copy to copy.



Picture from Wikipedia.

Flux Boxes were often labeled by year, and contained games, puzzles, ephemera, and other small objects generated by participating artists during that year. As such, Flux Boxes acted as a yearly anthology of creative activity.

Considering all three artists' museums, there are similarities and differences. Both Duchamp's Boite and Maciunas' Flux Boxes depended on miniaturization to achieve their compact size. Oldenburg's Mouse Museum is massive by comparison, yet is a smaller version of the museums that show it.

Both Duchamp and Oldenburg's efforts commemorate themselves. Only Maciunas included works by many other artists.

Duchamp and Maciunas' museums were also publications. Oldenburg's Mouse Museum was a miniature museum, one of a kind.

It is easy to understand why these famous artists memorialized themselves by building their own museums. But why me? I am not famous. As I write this, I am 70 years old. At this point in my life, being famous would be unfortunate because I enjoy my life as it is. And yet...

...I have done a lot of real-space sculpture as well as 3D modeling on the computer. I want to sum up my sculpture and I want to place my summation, a catalog raisonne in the form of an artist's museum, where it will be accessible, where viewers can see it and even, maybe, manipulate it. I want to make my work publically available.

But more than that, I want to be the first artist to build an artists' museum in cyberspace.

Rather than focus on the material and "object" aspect of art museums, I've chosen to focus on the immaterial. This is what makes it is more accessible, the fact it is in cyberspace. You can go to the

Reliquary without leaving the comfort of your home via the Internet. Actually, you can get to the Reliquary from anywhere.

Rather than commemorate myself, I've chosen to focus my attention on a cartoon character, Mr. Milk Bottle, in the form of the Milk Bottle Reliquary. All the objects inside the Reliquary, as well as those floating in the atmosphere are connected in some way to Mr. Milk Bottle.

Who is Mr. Milk Bottle?

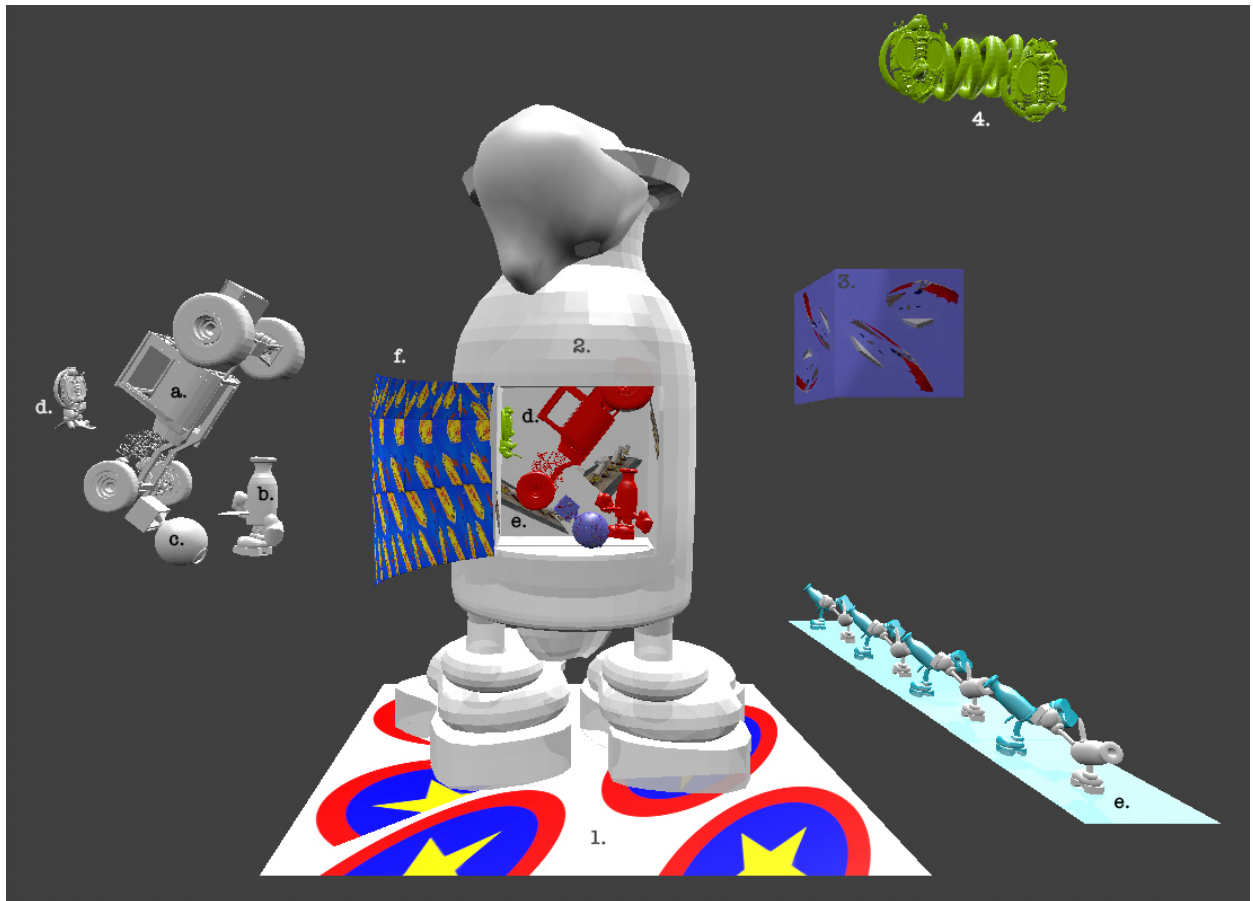
Mr. Milk Bottle is a rubber hose cartoon character I invented as I was beginning to get serious about using 3D modeling software in my work. I found early industrial forms, such as water towers, or, yes, milk bottles were excellent subjects because their geometry was relatively simple.

Here is the first series of prints I did concerning the Bottle, with the use of 3D modeling software:



In these panels, I introduce MMB. He has body parts and he has 3 dimensions. He represents a fictional corporation, The Badge of Quality. MMB has lived a very long time. Among other things, he has acted in movies and was a Civil War hero. His connection to the Hydrogen Bomb disturbs him.

For all these reasons, I chose Mr. Milk Bottle to act as the form for my sculpture reliquary.



Match the numbers or letters listed in the key below to the objects in the picture.

Key

1. The Badge of Quality Corporate Plane, the Reliquary's chosen form of transportation.
2. The Milk Bottle Reliquary, a project funded by the Badge of Quality.
3. The Leonardo da Vinci Flying Machine Cubed: an early form of transportation used by the Reliquary.
4. The Sun God Chromosome, the mature form of the Infant Sun God. See below.

Objects inside the Reliquary are shown without color in an exploded form outside as a constellation. The spatial relationship of the individual parts remains constant, inside or outside the Reliquary.

Objects in the Reliquary

- a. 1929 Ford Pickup, (also called The Red Truck by Fred Truck), but this hot rod is powered by digital gas. Analog Engine occupies the engine compartment. The Memory Device is in the pickup bed. This hot rod is the ultimate expression of mobile computing.

- b. Sculpture of Rocky Milk Bottle, an expression of a great heavyweight champion with a fatal glass jaw.
- c. The Bomb is often thought of as a reference to the Atom Bomb of WWII, but in the Reliquary it refers to suppressed anger that leads one to follow the path of Rocky Milk Bottle.
- d. The Infant Sun God is the sworn enemy of the Reliquary, threatening to use his mature form, the Sun God Chromosome, to bathe the Reliquary in harmful solar radiation. Yet, the Infant is cataloged in the Reliquary like everything under the Sun.
- e. **Stop Action**, a wall painting in several parts documenting a sculpture of the same name. It depicts Mr. Milk Bottle walking through an 8-hour linear clock. He begins young and fresh, but by the end of 8 hours, he is old and feeble. Miraculously, he's made new and starts off on another 8-hour cycle, three of these cycles making up a solar day. **
- f. A wall mural referring to the original flight plan of the Leonardo da Vinci Flying Machine Cubed. The flight plan called for the pilot to fly Leonardo's ornithopter through a figure-8 Klein bottle without losing orientation. A Klein bottle is a 4-dimensional manifold that has one side and no edges. It cannot exist in 3-dimensional space.

About **Stop Action.

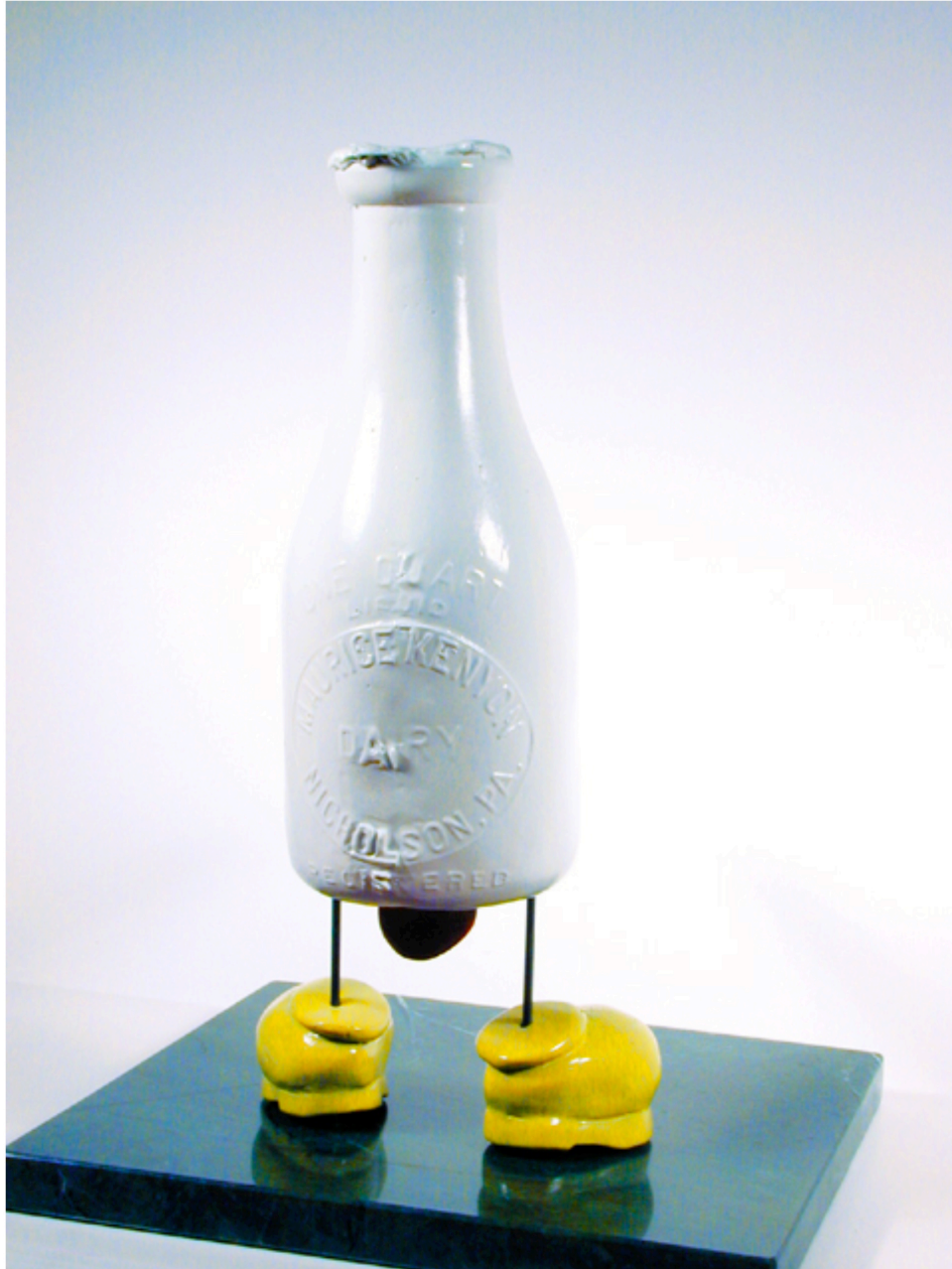
Stop Action exists in three forms.

The first form is a real-space sculpture, a little over 8 feet long. It is made of Absolut Black Granite, marble, wood, brass, automotive paint and urethane plastic, which I cast myself.

Urethane is a remarkable material. Most materials used in casting sculpture, such as bronze, or any other metal, are hot when they go in the mold, and then cool. Usually, in the cooling process, they shrink.

Unlike these metals, urethane is cool when it is poured, and then generates tremendous heat and expands. If you use a mold which is also made of urethane (different formulation) the heat generated melts the mold to some degree. This means that the mold has a very short useful life. It might last 8 or 10 copies, but there will be deformations, holes, and distortions. The dents and distortions get progressively worse with each copy. I placed the earliest copy at the start of the 8-tile walk, and the worst at the end. This indicates passage of time.

When you view the actual sculpture, you must be certain to examine each casting closely. The differences from first to the last are subtle.



Results of a typically melted mold. Things pop in and sink simultaneously in this distortion.

The Wall Mural inside the Reliquary is a picture of the actual sculpture. The Mural is fragmented from one wall to the next. This is the second form.

The third form is situated right next to the Badge of Quality Plane. This is the most abstract form of Stop Action. This form exists only in cyberspace, a perfect medium for abstraction. The Bottle himself undergoes no physical change. He is moving through time.

Is he immortal? Time will tell.

In conclusion, Milk Bottle Reliquary is the first catalog raisonne of an artist's work done in 3 dimensions of space. The Reliquary is my artist's museum, as well. I have enjoyed making it, and I am presenting to you, now.