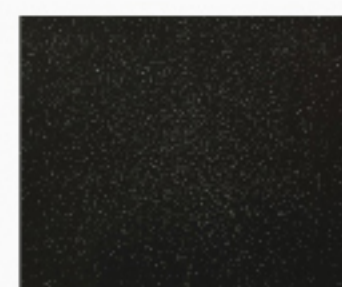


WALKER

Unconventionally Real: Nine Artists Discuss Their Work in *Lifelike*



Reconsidering Realism

Can the use of realism—something rendered with a visually accurate relationship to the observed world—be seen as unconventional in the context of contemporary art? This core question of the exhibition *Lifelike* can be addressed through many of the works on view. In these excerpts from the [exhibition catalogue](#), nine artists—Ai Weiwei, Vija Celmins, Susan Collis, Keith Edmier, Robert Gober, Kaz Oshiro, Peter Rostovsky, Paul Sietsema, and Mungo Thomson—offer a glimpse into their work process and the notion of radical realism.



Mungo Thomson, *Between Projects*, 2001

Courtesy the artist

I think pencils in factories are made with a lead core and two pieces of wood stuck together around it, then paint, eraser, etc. I did a version that was more in line with what I was capable of in my studio at the time, since the piece was so much about art being my “job” now (after getting my MFA and having my first commercial gallery show) and reporting to the studio as if it was an office (not to mention the studio-as-office turn in conceptual art) and hanging around there waiting for inspiration to strike, and making the waiting the inspiration. Hence the title. So I took wooden dowels, sanded them into hexagonal shafts, drilled holes down their centers and dropped fitted leads in with wood glue. Spray-painted the exterior, had a custom stamp made based on pencils I had in the studio (“Sanford Eagle”) and stamped them with black enamel. Hand-fashioned tin fittings for rubber erasers. Then sharpened them and stuck them in the ceiling. There was a high failure rate with all those stages and it took a couple of months.

—Mungo Thomson