

Jennifer Vanderpool

2 Installations: Greetings from Sunny Bunny & Mama's Little Helper

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Jennifer Vanderpool's most recent installation, *Greetings from Sunny Bunny!*, invites the viewer to visually navigate undulating rivers made of sour belts, pools of pink cotton candy fluff, and majestic molded mountains. Constructed with mass-produced candy products that line grocery store checkout lines, Vanderpool has brought to life a topographical map of an imaginary Candyland landscape with this large-scale installation. *Greetings from Sunny Bunny!* is an experiment in alchemy where metaphor and science transmute into an unknown final product. In the fine, granulated fragments comprising the bulk of the sculpture, the over-processed character of the sugary food goods is ever more evident as they undergo the reverse in an entropic chemical process. Over time, the piles of blue, pink, and orange Jell-O powder, candy molds, and cotton candy will disintegrate, melting into sweetly-sickening pools of congealed paste. And so, in line with the thoughtful qualities of Vanderpool's oeuvre, the magical transmutation of the artificial into a simulated nature provides the backbone to her investigation into edible consumer culture.

Exploring the topography of landscapes, whether synthesized or appropriated from nature, is a familiar endeavor to Vanderpool. Her work oftentimes pushes the limits of convention, blurring the loaded boundaries between popular culture and nature, consumerism and the consumed. *Greetings from Sunny Bunny!* combines obsessions with surface play and tactility borrowed from a postmodern pop culture with the site-specific land works of the 1970s that so surreptitiously reworked the artist's relationship to space and the natural world. It is the pronounced contradiction of two ideologies—one that embraces nature's transient

quality and the other a pointed acknowledgement of a cultural need to own materials goods—that allows Vanderpool to subvert their meaning in a way that is most pertinent to contemporary culture. Through her work, Vanderpool has exposed the American food fetish by constructing a landscape rife with cultural signifiers; in the sweetly innocent pale pinks and blues of the Candyland we find subtle commentaries on obesity, eating disorders, and the conflation of consumption and ownership. The installation is physical site where plays between restriction and over-indulgence, coveting and craving take place.

Befitting of Vanderpool's taste for irony, the natural world is best represented in this piece through the accompanying video, in which she constructs a mock-up of the chemical changes occurring within the piece under our unknowing noses. Plastic geometric toys, serving as brightly colored stand-ins for molecules, bounce up and down, back and forth across the screen. Purposely non-didactic, these visual aids demonstrate that every element of this artificially natural world is in a constant state of flux. Ever evolving, *Greetings from Sunny Bunny!* is an indication of our inability to imagine the microscopic world and its many ecosystems buried beneath the landscape.

For Vanderpool, the suggestion of the real through mimicry is an effective strategy in articulating actual experience. As *Greetings from Sunny Bunny!* provides the viewer with an artificial interpretation of the natural world, so does it reveal the inconsistencies of the culture that produced its delectable elements--recipe not included.

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