



Before I knew about this exhibition, I hadn't thought about its eponym other than in a context of something weird. The word "odd" would link to uneven numbers, or the games we used to play in class in elementary school, when we had to identify the "odd one out."

Here, the definition is expanded and *odds* become "objects that artists hold dear," existing on the periphery of a practice but vital to the creative process. This exhibition brings them together: Objects submitted by more than eighty artists; objects they understand as their *odd*. Writing this, I haven't seen them yet, but I imagine wandering through the space, trying to understand what they are, and what they do.

The first objects I register are the ones that are familiar. Then there are the ones that I am seeing for the first time, but can still imagine what they might be. But there are others, things I can describe but not decipher, let alone name. I see tools and models and tries that have been scrapped; I see things that were intended to become something and then kept as something else. Things we still own but don't know why. I imagine that some of these objects might have been given to us for safekeeping, and we kept them for so long that they have become ours entirely. I see things that are broken or without any practical function and could easily be dismissed as useless, and yet they have been deemed too valuable to be thrown away.

This value that cannot be translated into money, since the objects in here cannot be bought—not in stores, not in galleries, let alone be ordered or commissioned as an *odd*. So how can one get hold of an *odd*, I wonder, when it is impossible to simply take someone else's and make it one's own. This is because of their deeply personal nature: They cannot be separate from their owner. *Odds* become through a process that one has little control over, involving coincidences, time, and decisions being made for an object, but not towards its *odd*-ness. When a connection is forged between a sentient being and a thing, the thing might turn into an *odd*.

There is a tale in Japanese folklore suggesting that objects of everyday use—implements and tools, plants and even animals—become inhabited by a spirit once they reach a hundred years. The first time I encountered these *tsukumogami* was in a video game in which I was being chased by umbrellas and lanterns, which made me grow fond of the idea. A hundred years is a time span that fascinates humans, because it is an age that is pursued, yet seldom attained. I have a memory of my sister asking a grandmother how old she was, and, upon learning that she was in her seventies, telling her full of relief that since she wasn't one hundred yet she would not die any time soon, something the grandmother kept quoting throughout the rest of her life. She never hit a hundred, but she came close.

An object that has been around for a hundred years has been respected and looked after. It has acquired a patina of experience and time, but it will also be worn out, fixed and altered. It will have survived and outlived others. It will have cracks and gaps, through which a spirit can enter. While most of the *odds* in here will not be as old as the inspired *tsukumogami*, they will have experienced similar care and respect. They won't begin to ruminate at night, but they hold the potential to release the stories they are charged with, if they are activated by being listened to. This is the power of an *odd*: interaction will reward you with a story through which you will not only understand the *odd*, but also learn about its person.

Submitting an *odd* to the public requires both braveness and trust, since it also requires submitting a part of oneself, therefore allowing for vulnerability. Though, I also find this openness to be empowering. What will others make of the story? What will they learn from it, about you, and about themselves? Interacting with an *odd* might differ from how one usually faces an artwork in an exhibition. I am wondering: can an *odd* be criticised, or would criticising an *odd* be criticising a person? This applies to exhibiting an artwork in the traditional sense, too, but the definition *artwork* might protect its maker—just like an *odd* might expose them.

The imperative is to listen to unlock it, employing a curiosity for both, the *odd* as an (art) object, and the artist as a person; the outcome might be that the *odd* is altered, charged with new experiences, stories and memories, joining what was there already.

Here is how I imagine an encounter my odd: a small clock. Imagine holding it, imagine examining it. Follow the circular trajectory of the seconds hand. From six to six; one minute. Take your time. Ask questions.

The size of a grapefruit, the clock is much lighter, because it is made of red hard plastic. You recognise it as an alarm clock, and somehow you know what sound the alarm would make if you set it—four unforgiving beeps in quick succession. Nothing unusual, although it has a coin stuck to it with putty, and some glue lines on its face. You will ask about this, later.

I've had this for over twenty years, I say, and you find the dust that has settled in the cracks to be evidence. I tell you that it was a present I got when I was six, still eternally curious and full of questions, or maybe on my first day of school, although that just seems to fit the narrative of it being a marker of me passing over from childhood into growing up too conveniently. Memories are unreliable; they need to be supplemented by tales that gain traction if they are anchored to a physical object.

And isn't that what makes an *odd* an *odd*? Something to mark an event, something to accompany the trajectory of a life, a becoming. One's learning, one's practice.

The clock is actually a bit ugly; I say. Very nineties, but at least no images of horses on its dial, which is probably why I kept using it. It was apt for the seven-year-old it was given to, and I tell myself that red was my favourite colour then, having moved on from pink, but I would change that to green in a few years, but by then the clock had become habit and I didn't mind it not being my chosen colour any more. I ask myself now whether I chose my favourite colour based on the object; whether this is all part of the symbiosis we enter with our *odds*.

The clock has been with me everywhere I've been: In my first childhood home to my second, reliably ringing at six in the morning for thirteen years. It moved with me when I started university, waking me at eight and I remember it being next to my bed in my dorm room during my year abroad. My current room in London is not much bigger, and the clock is still there.

The coin, I remark, is a Canadian cent minted in 2004. My uncle, who emigrated to Vancouver before I was born, placed it there when he came to visit, and I never removed it. I tell myself that at that time I had already begun to understand that objects could hold history. The same goes for the glue lines that have remained from when I put tape around the clock when I moved house, or country—expressing my worry that the clock that I did not yet know as an *odd* yet, would suffer damage.

It is a bit broken now, I say, having been dropped a few times: The seconds hand is loose, but I don't need it to show the seconds any more, now that I know how a clock works. Growing up changed how I experience time, and the clock mirrors this. And when it fell the last time, I was finishing my degree. Now, I am unable to change the time the alarm rings. It is stuck at seven thirty. Conveniently, and again fitting the narrative, this is when I decided I should get up now, as an adult. But often, I wake up earlier than that and forget to turn off the alarm, annoying my flat mates, who urge me to just use my phone, something I refuse to do, stubbornly honouring my broken and out-of-fashion *odd*, lacking any rational reason to hold onto it.

But *odds* have a right to exist, no matter what their state. They very much belong, not only in this exhibition, or to a practice, an artist or a person. Because of what they can do, they belong in the world as odds. Their mere being is almost rebellious—a challenge to the capitalist grind of commercial usefulness or the fetishization of the new and fresh, against ageist hierarchies, against trends. They have moved homes and studios, and been saved from bins. They have been defended before others, explained, fixed, cared for. They have taken up space that could have been used for things that others would find more useful. An *odd* cannot easily be read, not like the objects we own because they hold the promise to grant us a consumable identity—coolness, desirability, a higher status in society. But these objects are passive, their meaning taught to us. *Odds*, on the other hand, are objects that whisper if they are activated, and those who slow down to listen will understand. They are an anchor for identity, a record of their owner's growth or the evolution of an artist's practice or simply of a memory.

And so we put our *odds* out to be seen, using this platform to generate a collective experience. Let us activate the *odds* present here, let history enter through the cracks, let them tell their stories through us in the same way as we tell our stories through them. They might not be as old as the *tsukumogami*, but they are nonetheless alive, not only to their owners, but, by being here, to others, too—for a day, two months or for a hundred years.