

On Edible Furniture and Other Questions

Susan Nash

...that which you do not want to know but which you know, ...that which you do not want to say but which you say, ...that which you do not want to be but which you are...

Juan Hidalgo

Shi, the carpenter, was on his way to the kingdom of Chi when he arrived in Chu Yuan and found an oak which provided a meeting place for the community...His apprentice turned to (him) and said, " Master, in all the time I have been with you, I have never seen a tree as beautiful as this one. And yet you pass it by without as much as a glance." Shi replied, "That tree is useless. Its timber is good for no purpose." When (he) returned home, the sacred oak appeared to him in a dream and said, "To what do you compare me ? Would you compare me to useful trees such as bear cherries, pears, oranges, lemons and other fruit ?...I have long striven to be useless, in spite of which I have on several occasions almost been destroyed. Finally, however, I have managed to become completely useless...You and I are both things, and how can one thing judge another ? What can a useless mortal like yourself know of a useless tree ?"

Chuang Tzu

I collect rubbish, and consider it part of my job to patrol the district and get there before the gipsies. I have long felt attracted to these rejected things poking out richly preposterous form behind our smug, shiny surfaces. Trash, witness to a past that coerces and empowers.

"The world assaults you, pulls you to pieces, remakes you". I like using objects torn from their context; I enjoy remaking them, at times bedizening them. I hope they retain something of the texture of lived experience: a certain precarious vitality challenging the stern solidity of the given. Pressing their way through the heavy sleep of material existence, they aspire to the state of haunted, infested matter. I use them for my own purposes, but I try to preserve something of the past they carry with them, and I like to think that I also help them in their silent attempt to exist, to be visible at last, something only possible after their extinction as means to an end.