

dolly noun

1. DOLL
2. a wooden-pronged instrument for beating and stirring clothes in the process of washing them in a tub
3. a compact narrow-gauge railroad locomotive for moving construction trains for switching
4. a platform on a roller or on wheels or casters for moving heavy objects
5. a wheeled platform for a television or motion-picture camera

dolly rolls into 218

"I was dropped off at studio 218 a few years ago by a man who knew my value. He told the studio occupier that I would be useful. The studio belonged to Bax and she was reluctant. "The sculptures are light!" I heard her exclaim. I was stacked in the corner.

When Bax got used to me being around, I was brought out for short trips to move materials. Sometimes I made it out to the carpark and into the goods-lift. Then she started welding armatures on me. I'm not appropriate for this job - I'm made of wood! She spun me around like a turntable so she could consider armatures in the round.

After a while, I noticed a change of gear, a new obsession with half of my material make-up: wheels. She ordered them en masse in different sizes. The first sculpture where she used wheels was called *Hopper*: she could have used half the amount and it would have moved smoothly, but a collection of half a dozen, found themselves attached to the bottom of a steel frame. Was she making fun of me?

Sculptures with wheels could move around the studio at ease – out the way or into the middle of the studio floor. I wondered if I might be becoming redundant. Bax spoke fondly of Rebecca Warren's shoes which had castors like me underneath raw clay. She first saw the work at the Saatchi Gallery when she was a student. She remarked how playful the subject of movement was depicted through the use of a functional object. The prospect of activating a sculpture which could not be touched was electrifying. *Apparently*.

Bax has a lot to say about the logistics of making sculpture. She seems particularly proud of not having many tools which I'm convinced would make her life easier. Her set up is basic: a small vice for bending metal, two power tools, a small electric welder and a domestic shredder which can only shred the maximum of 5 sheets at a time despite putting monumental amounts of discarded newspaper through overworked teeth. Bax talks about how much logistics can inform and change the making of sculpture. She is always referencing Anthony Caro's studio and how the work changed when a fork lift truck replaced the gantry. I heard that his later work makes more sense if you view it sitting down because Caro was sitting on a mobility scooter when the work was constructed. For someone who is so interested in logistics, it is remarkable how many sculptures Bax makes which cannot get out the studio door.

Recently, a mezzanine was built for storage at 218. More skates have joined me and now there is a chill out zone for my friends and me when we are not needed. A new work bench was

fabricated and yes, you guessed it, wheels were added on the bottom. Everything is now more mobile.

Bax was told that small sculptures were not for the lazy eye. She has been working on a series of smaller works for Holtermann Fine Art. They seem to be considering inside and outside spaces with more urgency. There are small wheels on some of these sculptures too – Bax glides them about on her workbench with one hand, she seems to find it funny. When sculptures are finished, they are placed on the new shelves so they are out the way but not out of view.

I observed *Floss* being made for the exhibition. My friend and I were needed on both ends when the work was being planned flat on the floor. Many of her recent obsessions collide in this work: steel bent to make hooks; steel welded to form levers; windows; pockets; and bare lines. A couple of wheels were taken out while welding so I accepted that soon I would not be required. To my surprise, the sculpture was mounted onto the wall. Bax has collected a huge amount of different shades of pink household paint which she mixed together with shredded paper. She even threw some pink confetti to the mix. What *is* she celebrating? Wheels cannot function in this position!

I'm not in the same camp as these sculptures. My purpose might change but I'll always be an aid; one of the few tools in 218. It's sculpture which should be having an identity crisis: they are absurdly useless."