

GALLERIES

# Love and other untouchable energies, from artist Harry Dodge

By **Cate McQuaid** Globe Correspondent, January 30, 2019, 4:17 p.m.



“Pure Seemings” is one of the works by Harry Dodge on display in a new exhibit at Tufts University Art Gallery. HARRY DODGE

MEDFORD — Harry Dodge has a drawing, “Pure Seemings,” in his antic, generous, restless show at Tufts University Art Gallery, in which a hand reaches across a laptop

keyboard and shoves two fingers up the nostrils of the face appearing on the screen.

It distills one of the California artist's points: The hard distinction between real and virtual is artificial. Everything exists along a spectrum of material substance. And Dodge exults in materials: their heft, their messiness, their sheen.

The show, "Works of Love," is titled for a new series of bronze sculptures, each with two branching pipes. In "The Monstrous Interval (Works of Love #6)," one branch supports a dowel with pinwheel-shaped cranks, and the other, a screen of polished bronze. It represents relationship, or the work of love: What do these two forms do to each other? What do they create together?

Love is one of several untouchable energies we may navigate every day, each with its own juicy resonance. Dodge's art lends material heft to the expanding virtual world, artificial intelligence, and philosophy, nodding to models of how consciousness and society work. "Pure [Expletive] Hotdog Cake" gloriously makes design theorist Benjamin H. Bratton's stack model of a digital society into a drippy, oozy, colorful cake topped with branching pipes and a giant, declarative wiener.

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The goofy, audacious “I Am a Strange Loop (Interface Series)” refers to cognitive scientist Douglas Hofstadter’s book, an examination of the nature of identity. Slicked in fuchsia automotive paint, it looks like an upended pinball machine with a screen of polished burl wood and awkward rods that might be handlebars. Ride at your own risk.

Dodge invites viewers to do the work of love and recognize what might be “other” on a continuum with humans. His endearing “consent-not-to-be-a-single-being” robotic figures express eagerness and pathos. They bend back to greet us with comic protruding noses and round, hollow eyes, while on the opposite side, eyes pour from their downward-facing backs.

We are not single beings, but continuous and interconnected. Making the connections manifest, Dodge’s art is a little scary, decidedly garish, and quite the party.

### **HARRY DODGE: Works of Love**

At Tufts University Art Gallery, Aidekman Arts Center, Tufts University, 40 Talbot Ave., Medford, through April 14. 617-627-3518, [artgallery.tufts.edu](http://artgallery.tufts.edu)

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