

## Beauty

My new works forewarn viewers of a paradox underlying the production of art throughout history – what is art, and what is beauty? What appears as art to one may appear as aesthetically insignificant object to another. These notions of art and its limitations have enveloped the debates around contemporary art since the introduction of Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* at the New York Society of Independent Artists in 1917.

Risk denotes uncertainty, loss and an inability to perceive or forecast a predictable outcome. I have chosen to create work which risks placement in terms of aesthetic appeal. These works consist of a planar space divided into two equal planes, the first holding a disclaimer found on common cosmetic products and the second holding a linear representation of the corresponding product's barcode. Neither of these elements have previously been aesthetically claimed by previous art-making practices; both, however, are shown by juxtaposition to refer to historical artmaking practices. The long, hand-drawn lines of the barcode measure 2.5 feet; they seem familiar and draw the viewer in, while the text contests the simplicity of the lines below it. Thus, one field reads as a conceptual statement and the other mimics the construction of a hard-edge painting.

Mathematicians Kaplan and Garrick (1981) note that risk is "relative to the observer" and has to do with both uncertainty and damage. In my work, the viewer is challenged to suspend their inherited notions of what art is, thereby accepting both the barcode and textual disclaimer as works of art. There is a certain irony to these the works further complicated by the fact that the cosmetic labels list potential hazards to consumers if the products are used incorrectly – in the same way the label foreshadows the same risks present to the viewer if they chose to accept or decline the work as an artform. As one text panel proclaims, *Avoid contact with eyes*.

My work can be seen as risk driven or because risk is dependent on the engagement or internalization of risk by an audience. Risk also concerns what can be lost, and can be further defined as a spatial surface where decisions are made by an artist which can maximize viewers' possible gain by minimizing possible loss. My latest works test viewers' perceptual ability to recontextualize aesthetically unfamiliar symbols and concepts by linking them – ironically and playfully – to historically legitimated forms of modern art.