

Nicole Eisenman
Fixed Crane, 2024
Artist Statement

A lot of work doesn't have an idea. It has thoughts and a sort of speculative drive about it.

—Phyllida Barlow

Remember to imagine an urban landscape that connects people and takes the mental and physical health of its citizens into consideration when making land use decisions in New York City. What if the next new tallest building had an open-air green market on its ground floor? The second and third floors could be a public swimming pool and hell, throw in a day care center and a retirement community. What if half of the floors were truly affordable housing? What if we had development policies that privileged the needs of the most vulnerable? What if Hudson yards were community greenhouses or simply a field of grass with a dog run? What about a cat run? New York City is continuously being built, even when this unceasing development seems unnecessary, considering that nearly a quarter of all office space in Manhattan still sits empty.

I found the crane in a crane graveyard in Tennessee. Now it is toppled over, reclining; gravity has won. In this inert position, some new features— let's call them barnacles— have attached themselves to the crane. What can a machine without purpose do? It is a shape. It has an interior space. It can be climbed on or sat on. It can become a sculpture to be walked around and looked at. It is peculiar, lying on its side on the grass in a park; it is idle now, it has opted-out, it's dreaming of what could be.