Troy Abbott

At first glance, Troy Abbott’s birdcage constructions appear decorative. The unusual cages attract, with the assumption that, a pet bird stand singularly occupies the ornate homes, only upon close inspection, does it become apparent that the bird is animated by a looping video. In every bird/cage construction, the bird is a typical house pet variety and is content to quietly sit on it’s perch with only the occasional movement. It is the bird’s cage that takes center stage instead of the pet. Each differs in style and tone, the cages are refurbished antiques made of metal. The artist combs antique shops, flea markets and unusual places to find the cages he employs. The deteriorated objects are the coaxed into a new life through additions or restoration, depending on the condition of the cage. The color of the cages and the choice of birds are coordinated to enhance the sensation of the work as a single entity. Video art that doesn’t draw attention to the use of moving images results in an unusually subtle series. In a field where it can be more typical to find works featuring overly bright colors and fragmented images, forming streams of abstraction and quick moving looping design to disorient-sometimes as a way to create stillness or a fresh perspective- the use of a single realistic image that barely moves almost seems ground breaking. Abbott’s birdcage videos may create the ultimate pet- one that never dies, doesn’t chirp too loud, or needs it’s home cleaned.