

mihai nicodim gallery

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Phil Wagner

'End of March'

March 28th – May 11th 2013

Opening Reception: March 28, 2013, 6-9 pm

Mihai Nicodim Gallery is pleased to present 'End of March', an exhibition by Los Angeles based artist Phil Wagner.

Phil Wagner's new body of work is as propositional as it is suppositional. This binary threads conceptually and materially through his exhibition as form curtails function and gesture is deftly mechanized. A series of precisely formal executions within Wagner's new work boldly ruminate on the contemporary currency of assemblage. To a larger end, the new work appropriates methods and notions surrounding Constructivism, Dada, and Expressionism in rhetorical reflection.

The 'cut' has numerous incarnations within Wagner's new exhibition, the architecture of his surfaces dismantling traditional conceptions of the additive. Wagner's metal 'paintings', collaged cut-outs of spray-painted steel, have a totality and veneer which genuflect more to the act of reconstruction than deconstruction. The formalism of these warped edifices are mimicked in his surrounding sculptures wherein steel-meets-wood democratically. Alongside the hanging metal works, Wagner exhibits six small wooden tables whose faces are decoratively ingrained with a styled optic patterning. Juxtaposing two shades of wood, the tables' faces echo a similar material discourse found in the artist's metal works. Playing materials against one another, Wagner's assemblages read more of Man Ray than Braque or Schwitters. The product is conjectural and surreal while eloquently assuming the ruse of high formalism.

Much like the show's title, Wagner's new work alludes to a false ending. The structure of his exhibition reflects an ongoing search for objectivity within the fluid tenants of post-post modern presentation. Just as Wagner stylistically looks to past and present for inspiration, he also conceptually looks to both propose and suppose in equal measure. The work reflects a direct engagement with making which the artist has aggrandized and displayed through a looking glass. In this respect, form and study acquiesce as Wagner's systemic reincarnations propose something distinctly cyclical and infinite within his own practice.

Phil Wagner (b 1974) lives and works in Los Angeles. Selected exhibitions include Ma Prochaine Vie, Courtesy at the Pacific Design Center, West Hollywood, CA (2013), Farewell Rodney, Sommer Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel (2013) With Love, UNTITLED, NY (2012), Into The Surface, Brand New Gallery, Milan (2012), Voila, Parker Jones Gallery, Los Angeles (2011) and Henry Taylor/Phil Wagner, Rental Gallery, NY (2011)