

Brion Nuda Rosch's multimedia installation is sprawling yet restrained

Brion Nuda Rosch at DCKT Contemporary

By Suzanne Stroebe
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San Francisco-based artist Brion Nuda Rosch is a dark horse. At first glance, his solo debut at DCKT Contemporary is deceptively simple, but through repetition of color and form it slowly reveals itself to be complex and of subtle wit.

The show begins before you enter the gallery, with a turquoise wall facing outwards onto the Bowery, but you don't realize it until you are halfway through, at which point the saturated hue (Pantone 15-5519 to be exact) reveals itself as Rosch's trademark. Covering several walls and sculptures, and also incorporated into many of the collages, the color has a breezy, tropical effect, but is saved from being flashy by expanses of bare white wall, simple architectural forms, and a limited palette of said turquoise, brown, black and white.

A series of small sculptures aptly titled *Balanced Significance* (2010), *Unknown Accomplishment*, *Unknown Hero* (2010) and *An Object's Significance Removed* (2010), are first found in the front room atop hip height pedestals, then clustered on a table in the back as if on sale. Their beginnings as small found statuettes or toys becomes clearer with further inspection, despite the fact that they have been covered in drippy, clumpy plaster and painted all over with a matte brown. This treatment recalls early works of Rachel Harrison, but their scale and simplicity diverges from her influence.

As in the sculptures, Rosch begins each collage with a found object, here an image taken from a 1970's encyclopedia or magazine. Small, rectangular cut outs of paper painted the same brown as the sculptures seem to float on top of images of billowing clouds, mountain ranges, or geologic scientific illustrations. Abstract, at times almost decorative, there is a sharp contrast in form and scale with the images beneath. This strange, humorous juxtaposition brings to mind anything from censor lines to modern sculpture parks. In pieces such as *Sunset Eyes* (2010) the process is further simplified, becoming subtractive, as Rosch has cut the same angular shapes directly out of the found pages. Powerful images of seascapes, gushing geysers and storm clouds hang, droopy and impotent, from nails in the wall, sans frames.

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The artist has put together a sprawling yet restrained multi-media installation encompassing several series of sculptures and collages. They are grouped together according to medium and process, but interact conceptually with each other in a way that makes it difficult to discern where one installation begins and another ends. I found myself walking in circles around the gallery, making new connections and needing to give most pieces a second look.

The repetitive color, humble materials and simple geometric forms lend a narrative quality to the work. Small-scale collages and sculptures teetering on unconventional pedestals branch off from the same starting point. Nature in the human form or as landscape are deliberately brought towards abstraction with small moves, collaging over an image with bits of painted paper, or obscuring a figure through erasure of detail. Altered only slightly in a methodical, additive process, the best pieces linger in a dreamlike space between the familiar and the strange.

Rife with contradictions, the show is contemporary yet nostalgic, minimal yet decorative, austere yet warm. The simple processes and concepts at play here demand time and contemplation. Ultimately, Rosch asks many questions of the viewer, and offers few answers.



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