

Theodore

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Bill Schwarz Disparate Objects

December 10, 2021 - January 29, 2022

Reception Friday December 10, 5-8 pm
Gallery hours Thursday–Saturday 12-6 pm

Theodore is pleased to present an exhibition of work by Bill Schwarz.

Bill Schwarz emerged from NYC's East Village art scene of the 1980's, as a founding member of the artist-run Pompeii gallery. He had solo exhibitions with galleries run by Stephanie Theodore, Philippe Briet and John Gibson, and has exhibited with gallerists including Colin de Land, Daniel Newburg, and Gavin Brown. Bill's work has also been selected for multiple projects organized by curator Bob Nickas.

With strong interests in non-objective abstraction, pop, process art, minimalism, post-minimalism and a belief in the eminence of conceptual art, Schwarz has consistently borrowed across disciplines and employed appropriation to materialize the formalist vocabulary within his art-making practice.

On view is an installation of 32 separate art works. Each piece is composed of several machinist's steel blocks, variously described as gauge blocks, set up blocks, fixtures and jigs. Their shapes are two: square bar (general cuboid) and rectangular bar (rectangular cuboid) of various lengths. These blocks are used to "square up" an object to be tooled and to brace a piece being tooled.

There are blocks which are one inch by two inches by three inches and generally are found in matched pairs, referred to in machinist parlance as parallels. Often the blocks are hand made by a machinist and sometimes signed with their name or initials. They were used daily and show their shop wear while remaining highly accurate. The blocks are often used for a lifetime. Schwarz scours estate sales and auctions to find these well used tools, which only are sold when the owner dies.

A unique quality to gauge blocks known as "wringing" is the way they bond to each other. Wringing is the process of sliding two blocks together so that their faces bond. Because of their ultraflat surfaces, when wrung, gauge blocks adhere to each other tightly. The compositions are easily assembled, disassembled and recombined. Schwarz has created compositions bonded by gravity and the wringing process.

Schwarz considers these compositions "recumbent modernist monuments," using the term monument in its referential sense, not implying a huge scale. (The origin of the word "monument" comes from the Greek mnemosynon and the Latin moneo, monere, which means 'to remind', 'to advise' or 'to warn', suggesting a monument allows us to see the past thus helping us visualize what is to come in the future). It is critical to note that the objects are of their own scale in purposefulness to the machinist and do not represent a miniature version of anything. Their forms do however evoke high modernist architecture, furniture and landscape, ideas far larger than the modest scale of the actual works.

The presentation is horizontal, on tables, a reference to flea market and tool swap meets which is often how used tools are traded or exchanged. They also evoke how architectural models are presented, but again, they aren't miniatures.

Schwarz now resides in rural Bucks County Pa. and maintained a working studio at The Loom in the Port Richmond section of Philadelphia for nearly a decade. He has participated in Philadelphia's Open Studio program (POST) for the past four years presenting his new artworks as well as custom fabricated furniture.