

Bushman, Max
"Determined not to become a product: The Minus Objects"
[ArtSlant](http://www.artslant.com/ny/articles/show/38168).
<http://www.artslant.com/ny/articles/show/38168>
January 2014.

LUHRING
AUGUSTINE

531 West 24th Street
New York NY 10011
tel 212 206 9100 fax 212 206 9055
www.luhringaugustine.com

ARTslant New York



[The Minus Objects 1965-1966](#)

Michelangelo Pistoletto
Luhring Augustine Bushwick
25 Knickerbocker Ave, Brooklyn, New York, NY 11237
December 18, 2013 - May 3, 2014

Determined not to become a product: The Minus Objects
by Max Bushman

Luhring Augustine's Bushwick satellite currently hosts the "possibilities" of Michelangelo Pistoletto. An array of things, thoughts, and playful points of interest fill the floor and walls. Vastly ranging in scope, they generate a powerful effect that often feels absent in contemporary art.

The Minus Objects, 1965-66 speak to an interesting period of Pistoletto's life and career. Around this time, the artist began to pioneer the predominantly Italian movement Arte Povera. *The Minus Objects* signaled this decisive shift. With these works Pistoletto distanced himself from the series of mirror paintings (1962), that brought him critical acclaim and international recognition. *The Minus Objects* were originally displayed in Pistoletto's studio to resist "categorization and commodification." They were not conceived as individual items but rather as a whole, a singular statement.

In the Bushwick show *Piramide Verde* (1965), an outdoor style wooden table topped with a tall green pyramid occupies the center of the twenty-eight works on display. Just to the left, *Lampada a mercurio* (*Mercury Lamp*) (1965) hangs suspended at head height. Simple in construction, the foot-wide aluminum light creates a strong vertical line, and shines its green light at nothing in particular. *Colonne de cemento* (*Concrete Columns*) (1965), an austere quartet of shafts punching eight feet upwards, reflects the *Mercury Lamp* in another strong vertical. The variety of color, shape and material as well as the familiarity of many of the objects ensnares the viewer every direction they turn.

“Determined not to become a product: The Minus Objects”

ArtSlant.

January 2014.

531 West 24th Street
New York NY 10011
tel 212 206 9100 fax 212 206 9055
www.luhringaugustine.com



Pistoletto describes how each work is merely a “possible thing” that he grasped as it passed through his mind and desire. These works are not considered with reason or in relation to one another, but rather as moments. Each piece is inevitably different because, according to the artist, every moment is unique.

The show feels open and new, even though it is literally the opposite. Pistoletto achieved fame in the 60’s for his very specific brand of mirror paintings and thereafter he resolutely shunned the commercial gallery world. He rejected high-end gallery representation and cut his recognizable label as an artist. For Pistoletto, *The Minus Objects* were an escape from the powerful commercial system that the art world was becoming. He was determined not to become a product to be manipulated and abused.



The exhibition gives off the wonderment of a child in a toy store. The space is piled with things of beauty and intrigue, and their totality is satisfying. The pleasure and relief that Pistoletto felt from rejecting the pressure and commitment of a professional artist is delightfully present. And it is all the more precious for being so tragically absent from the vast majority of art today.

— [Max Bushman](#)

(All Images: [Michelangelo Pistoletto](#), *The Minus Objects 1965-66*, installation shot at [Luhring Augustine Bushwick](#), 2014; Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York, and Galleria Christian Stein, Milan.)