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“Michelangelo Pistoletto, “The Minus Objects 1965-1966”
Time Out New York.
Issue 947, March 27-April 2, 2014, p. 38.



Michelangelo Pistoletto, “The Minus Objects 1965–1966”

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Luhring Augustine Bushwick,
through May 11 (see Brooklyn)

Radical for their time, the sculptural pieces making up “The Minus Objects” were created by Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto in December 1965 and January 1966, and then displayed in his Turin studio. They were the ironic result of his success with the “Mirror Paintings,” in which full-scale photorealistic images were affixed to large reflective stainless-steel sheets. Determined to challenge the requirement of having a recognizable style, Pistoletto made these 28 works in a variety of materials. Together they represent the infinite possibilities of creation, minus themselves—hence the series’s title.

This sense of sublime absurdity extends to the pieces themselves. A deep wooden frame with built-in table and chairs becomes a 3-D painting one can enter. A figure-shaped bathtub steps down in size like a nesting doll. An enlarged photo of Jasper Johns’s head is divided into two versions: one with his ears cropped, the other of just his ears and the white void in between.

But the guiding spirit of the show is best conveyed by a cube made of mirrors. Lashed together with crisscrossing ropes, each side faces inward, away from the viewer—evoking an immeasurable realm where artistic options are as myriad as they are unseen.

—Paul Laster

THE BOTTOM LINE The artist explores—and gently sends up—the act of creation.