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# ARTFORUM

## Richard Rezac

MARC FOXX GALLERY

Richard Rezac's arrangements seem at first like shelved maquettes for Minimalist sculpture, rejected plans for modernist buildings, or scrapped industrial-design prototypes. Each delivers the appropriate visual codes but seems to have lost all logic. His subtle works seduce the viewer into reconciling what appears orderly because it looks familiar with what seems out of whack but actually follows its own internal reasoning.

Of the nine works in the show, two stood out in particular. *Untitled (99-07)*, 1999, hangs from the ceiling at eye level, challenging the viewer to figure out its structure. The piece is composed of long rectangular wood blocks in three sizes, joined along their long edges to create a form resembling a drop-leaf table with its two leaves hanging straight down at its sides. The top corner blocks are large, like capitals atop columns, and the work evokes the simple, balanced architectural system of post and lintel and the Minimalist love affair with symmetry and the grid. But the sides of the piece don't match. In one column the blocks descend from large to small, medium, and large again, while in the other, seemingly missing its bottom piece, the units go from large to medium to small. Moreover, the horizontal top element consists of one medium and one small block between the two large corner pieces. It feels all wrong, but it's not: Expecting to find symmetry, the viewer fails for a while to see the obvious logic. From one lower end to the other, the piece is a simple progression (small, medium, large or vice versa) that repeats three times, turning a corner with each new series.

In *Untitled (98-02)*, 1998, ten nickel-plated flattened bronze domes shaped like mushroom caps are suspended upside down from a steel armature that is cantilevered off the wall. As if reading constellations in the sky, the viewer has to get under the arrangement to analyze it. Large and small domes alternate along perpendicular axes. The final dome in one progression (small, large, small, large) is also the first dome in a perpendicular progression (large, small, large, small). The third dome in this line is the first element of another series, parallel to the first. This leaves the final small dome in the second line hanging off the side of the piece, a leftover or extra that blows any possibility of balance and confounds the viewer's search for a plan. But a longer look makes it clear that rather than a linear progression with a dislocated link, this is simply a perfectly ordered grid of alternating components, a pattern of columns and rows that uniformly distributes the two sizes as if they were the colors on a checkerboard but omits a few pieces. Once again: logic, order, consistency, harmony, right under our noses.

Unraveling these conundrums leads to another level, where the works resonate beyond formalist jokes and puzzles. These pieces are lovely and intriguing, but they also speak to how we look at things and assign judgments of use value, harmony, order, viability, correctness, and whether or not something "works." More subtly, they raise questions about managing systems that are doing fine by themselves, fixing things that aren't broken, and believing in things that appear to make sense when they never did.

—Christopher Miles