

CURATING THE COLLECTION: RODRIGO ORTIZ MONASTERIO

Steinbeck Never Saw Modernism

Mary Augustine Gallery October 16, 2012 to November 10, 2012

The exhibition, *Steinbeck Never Saw Modernism*, explores architecture in relation to art. The exhibition addresses Jonathan Monk's concept about Robert Smithson's *Hotel Palenque I* and modern architectural radicalism. Both concepts deal with rebuilding and blending new architectural characterizations with past architectural structures. In addition the exhibition demonstrates the social, economic, and political problems that living entropic systems face as their architectural and social-landscapes are in a state of continual transformation.

The exhibition *Steinbeck Never Saw Modernism* includes works by artists who use architecture and art history to reinterpret what contemporary art is, and the ways in which historic architectural landmarks are both stumbled upon and categorized. The exhibition includes work by artists Larry Bell, Luisa Lambri, and Mungo Thomson. The artists in this exhibition are all interested in restaging architectural and art historical ideas in relation to contemporary culture. This exhibition also contains a selection of books on radical modernism, minimalism, and California architecture, such as *Nature Near: The Late Essays of Richard Neutra, RM Schinder, and Greta Magnusson Grossman: Furniture and Lighting*.

Architecture and Minimalism, therefore, takes a central role in the exhibition space, serving as a historical and geographical dialogue between the artworks, and the books in a symbolic, spatial gesture. *Steinbeck Never Saw Modernism* is based on the methodology of research and the usage and forms of art as objects that interact with constructed elements and each other in a single unified space.

The works by Larry Bell *Under Construction* 2007, Mungo Thomson *White Album* 2008, and Luisa Lambri *Untitled (Sten-Frenke House, #04)* 2007 are placed in the exhibition space as a response to each other based on their similarities and how they alter one another. In addition the works provide a constant state of tension between their architectural and aesthetical possibilities (materially and conceptually). Imagining the works and their utopic deconstructions, as they become parallel structures and intertwining concepts, a desired modernity presents itself in a moment when that very modernity is continually disintegrating.

Steinbeck Never Saw Modernism was curated by Rodrigo Ortiz Monasterio.

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