

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce its first exhibition with artist Damián Ortega. Beginning his career as a political cartoonist, Ortega teases out the social conflicts embedded in even the most banal objects. In his films, sculptures, and other works he deconstructs the economic and political relationships bound together in commodities ranging from automobiles to tools. The creation of these whimsical new spatial relationships reacts with the viewer to establish a demystified reading of the history of the object leaving only its social significations intact.

In this new body of work, Ortega created a series of concrete and brick blocks by pressure sanding them into irregular shapes. Equating the loss of material with both geological erosion and the waste of capital, Ortega conflates the action of creating sculpture with an economics of positive and negative spaces. In this case, the economic structure is contingent with form and the process of creating sculpture. His use of bricks allow for further pockets of space within the sculpture recalling both the regular geometry of modernist urban planning, but also to osseous tissue like bone which is composed around tiny spaces. In another series of sculpture, Ortega casts ventilation hoses to appear as post-industrial fossils. These coiled works recall both urban detritus but also the organic coils of insects and worms. In both series of sculptures, Pre-Columbian antecedents mix within the modernist/industrial aesthetics and quasi-organic forms to reconsider the varied anthropological, artistic, and political strains that create urban environments.

Damián Ortega was born in 1967 in Mexico and currently lives and works in Berlin. He has had solo exhibitions at various international venues such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Tate Modern, London; Museu da Arte Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, Brazil; Kunsthalle Basel; and Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Centre Pompidou, Paris. He has been included in various prominent group exhibitions including the 2003 Venice Biennale, the 4th Berlin Biennial, and the 2006 Sao Paulo Biennial. This fall his work will be the subject of a retrospective at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, which will be accompanied by a catalogue published in coordination with Rizzoli.

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