

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present *Projections*, Michael DeLucia's second solo exhibition in Paris, and the gallery's fourth collaboration with this young American artist who is renewing the genre of sculpture in the age of computers.

This new series of dynamic works - large relief panels and volumes in plywood sculpted using a computer controlled router - continues a body of works that the artist has been developing since 2010, and takes it to a new level of formal and conceptual accomplishment.

Painted wood, gouged and gradated revealing the organic voice of the material; opposed and contradicting tones and forms; their regularity broken up by the many grooves hollowed by the machine, form a "conceptual geology" which questions the capacity for incarnation of these works designed on the computer and their capacity to exist, not only on the screen, but in the physical space inhabited by the viewer.

"I wonder about the condition of sculpture in the technological age," comments DeLucia, who observes that "today we work on the computer, which is an abstract and spatially fragmented place, and 99% of people will only see the exhibition on-line." For the artist, this reign of digital reproductions has transformed the very nature of our phenomenological experience, which occurs now only through the mediation of the image. Given this permanent prism which deforms our perception of the real - in a kind of latter-day version of Plato's allegory of the cave - DeLucia creates objects whose physiological reality confronts that of the beholder, posing a "problem in space" and "testing his vision of the world."

An heir to minimal and conceptual art, DeLucia has structured his proposition around a rigorous aesthetic vocabulary, limiting his experiments to a few primary geometrical forms - sphere, pyramid, cone and plane - and a limited palette of industrial paints used by the construction industry for their visual effectiveness.

Creating a marked contrast with the natural look of the wood with black, green and blue, the artist also uses these colours to evoke the technology of imagery: X-rays, blueprints, satellite photographs, the first computer screens, electronic microscopes, etc. Inspired by the idea that images are objects abstracted by radiation, DeLucia conceives his works as spatial models of projected images, with sculptures that describe the trajectory of a light ray from its source.

By putting in place this sensorial alphabet that is as elementary as it is powerful, DeLucia is able to show the impossibility of fully apprehending these pure forms. The gap between the perfection of the

3D file and the flaws that characterise its concrete realisation is manifested in the degradation of the compressed objects on the relief panels, and at other times through the blown out areas in the very heart of the works, where representation is torn apart. Pushed to its limits by the machine, the material reveals its incapacity to embody a concept, its impotence when it comes to retracing the ray of an idea, all the way to its synthesis.

This demonstration of an expressive vulnerability in the plywood, a brutal everyday material, the choice of which brings to mind the economy of means advocated by the Arte Povera artists, stands in opposition to the super-productions of contemporary sculpture. The splinters of wood escaping from the work save it from the temptation of formal academicism by creating a hook that poetically opens the sculpture to infinite possibility.

On the borders between figuration and abstraction, painting and sculpture, the readymade and the artisanal, DeLucia's work transfigures pure geometry into vectors that one can see. Full of surprises, light and mobile, his undulating sculptures achieve a musicality recalling the joyous lyricism of Sol LeWitt's Wall Drawings. In the tradition of Rodin, Calder and, more recently, Fred Sandback and Urs Fischer, who play on the register of the dematerialization of artworks, with Projections DeLucia establishes his position as "the first sculptor of virtuality"\*.

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Michael DeLucia was born in Rochester, New York, in 1978. He lives and works in Brooklyn. After studying art at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2001, he took a further degree in sculpture at the Royal College of Art in London, graduating in 2004. Formerly an assistant of Jeff Koons, DeLucia produced sculptures that effect the metamorphosis of practical objects into poetic, humorous apparitions before initiating a series of works on wooden panels offer a representation in relief of compressed objects modelled on computer.

In 2008 Galerie Nathalie Obadia in Brussels gave Michael DeLucia his first solo exhibition. Since then his works have entered prestigious private collections and have been exhibited at CRAC Alsace, at the Sculpture Center in New York, at the MetroTech Center in Brooklyn and at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Detroit.

\* Pierre Sterckx, « *Michael DeLucia : The virtualities of Sculpture* »-2009

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