

ART AND CAKE

Conceptual Craft II at Denk Gallery

Through August 18th

By Genie Davis

Photos Courtesy Denk



Tom LaDuke, *Oceans* (2015)

Conceptual Craft II, now at Denk Gallery, is a visual wonderment. 12 LA-based artists offer their takes on the sculptural process, intricate and graceful works that are both fully dimensional and filled with light. As the curator's notes suggest, there are strong roots from these works to the Light and Space movement that emphasized the closeness of concept, material, and manufacture.

Exhibiting artists include Gioj De Marco, Sean Duffy, Tim Ebner, Josephine Wister Faure, Kristen Morgan, Rachel Lachowicz, Tom LaDuke, Patrick Nickell, Michael Pierzynski, Tia Pulitzer, Ross Rudel, and George Stoll.

From the viewer's perspective, this show looks and feels like Los Angeles. Some works could be objects from film sets, others depict uniquely LA images, some echo the architecture of the city, or its ethos.

Ross Rudel's wood, acrylic, and steel "Blue Stripe" is a vertical tower that to some extent reminds one of the plethora of high-rises now towering, thin and wavering on a freeway approach, from the heart of downtown.

"Two Animals" from Tia Pulitzer is white gold, glaze, and clay, a terrific piece that pairs and literally intertwines coyote and python. There is something of a totem in this, these two wild creatures; it's the wilderness wrapped up in civilization, caught. It is who we are.

Rachel Lachowicz's "C Lycra Knit" is a plexiglass case in Chroma-key blue, reminiscent at once of television studio "blue screens" and the Pacific Ocean; modern and edgy, it is like a window into the skies of SoCal – at least on a clear day. And the "Untitled" powder-coated steel wall sculptures from Tim Ebner seem to evoke the terrain of the city, the mountainous topography that rings the Los Angeles basin.

The film industry gets an outright tribute from Gioj de Marco with "Replica of a Confessional Central Section" and "Replica of a Lamp Prop." He is essentially creating art that references the illusions of cinema. Viewed as props, they represent the art and artifice of film; viewed as art, they are realistically conveyed sculptural objects that represent reality: a visual conundrum. Equally cinematic but in an entirely different way, the illuminated installations of Josephine Wister Faure are glimpses of film magic itself. Viewed through the peep holes of metal boxes, her multimedia illuminated installations offer beautiful miniature looks at complete staged scenes. A darkly lit, narrowing tunnel is the subject of "Last Witness – 4," "Box Shining" gives the viewer a look at a long hallway that reminds one of a certain haunted hallway from a Kubrick film. These are mythic mini-worlds, powerful in their illusion, drawing those who peer into the peep holes into a memorable, voyeuristic world – just as any good film should do.

Tom Laduke's "Oceans" is a fascinating work, both surreal and intricately realistic. A shining sculpture of a human head is surrounded, face down, by a rock mass, and by a delicate metal filigree – like a Victorian lace collar or a form of coral. The smooth head seems to be overtaken by this lacy weaving, a discarded doll's head invaded by mysterious plant life, or a human head discarded and torn asunder, left to the ravages of nature. Carrying the Los Angeles theme further still, it could be viewed as emblematic of every grisly death the city has endured or sensationalized, or of a Hollywood slasher/horror film.

Conceptual Craft II is compulsive, necessary viewing. It's a look at ourselves, at the structure, shape, and stories of the City of Angeles. It's on exhibit through August 18th.

DENK GALLERY
749 East Temple St
Los Angeles, CA 90012

<http://www.denkgallery.com/>





Ross Rudel, *Blue Stripe* (2016)



Ross Rudel, *Dabbat al Ard* (2010)



Rachel Lachowicz, *C Lycra Knit* (2018)





Kristen Morgan, *There Goes My Everything* (2018)