

The New-York Times: 'Patrick Hill: Clumsy Angels', by Ken Johnson, January 27th, 2011

PATRICK HILL: 'Clumsy Angels'

By **KEN JOHNSON**

Bortolami

520 West 20th Street, Chelsea

Through Feb. 19

Patrick Hill's mainly abstract, retro-chic constructions have the snappy look of mid-1960s art. They are built of sharp-edged, neatly jointed wood beams dyed in bright Crayola hues, incorporating circles and rectangles of mirrored and transparent plate glass. Adding an oddly off-putting dimension are the silhouetted shapes of women's arms, legs and rumps cut from flat pieces of white marble. They have holes drilled in them so they can be hung on pegs in suggestive positions.

If you are unfamiliar with the artist's enterprise, you might see it as derivative and sexist. But **Mr. Hill**, a participant in the 2008 **Whitney Biennial**, is nothing if not knowing. His **project** is a species of meta-art, which skeptically reflects on kinds of art that in their time promised liberation from stifling aesthetic and social conventions.

Art of the '60s was in tune with that decade's dreams of a born-again world. But the radical design and revolutionary posturing of yesterday have been appropriated by today's advertisers for cars, cable television and sneakers ("Just Do It!"). So a new generation of artists emerged in the '80s — including Peter Halley, Sherrie Levine and Barbara Kruger — proposing that the only escape from corporate captivity was via an elevated critical consciousness. Mr. Hill's arch work follows that now academically well-established model, and its spirit of high-minded suspicion, however suavely embodied, now feels stale and claustrophobic. "Imagine greater," I want to tell him, even as I remember it is the Syfy Channel slogan. After all, what is the alternative?