

BERLIN

Reviews



KATJA STRUNZ

CONTEMPORARY FINE ARTS

Katja Strunz's attractive, geometrically inclined metal and wood sculptures present sharp folds, stark lines, and uninflected surfaces writ large. Triangular pieces often dovetail off gallery surfaces like huge paper planes; pastures of dented metal squares leafing out across walls can resemble supersize versions of Hans Arp's Dadaist collages titled "Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance." This show, however, found chance largely sidelined. In its stead was a somewhat slick, moneyed consistency that played to the gallery's grand David Chipperfield-designed digs while offering nothing weightier to counter them. Clocklike wall assemblages, noir and dreamily erotic from afar, seemed eager and clean up close. *Der Müde Traum* (2008), an enormous lacquered wood sculpture of pale planes that appeared to jut out of the gallery floor like shifting tectonic plates, could have offered architectural rigor and psychological pathos; instead it appeared big, quick, and vacuous. The work's enormity, and its fresh coat of white paint, seemed intended to disrupt the white cube, by mimicking it and then breaking it down. If the piece underwhelmed, it was perhaps because, for all its heft, it seemed to court the space more than fracture it. Its geniality canceled out any hoped-for violence.

The Berlin-based Strunz's preceding output—with its adept conflation of lean, elegant Constructivism and an absurd Surrealist knack with materials—has mostly impressed. Instructively, though, the CFA pieces look best in reproduction: their astute rhyming of line and space make each catalogue page a formal pleasure, if a slightly retrograde one. But in person the materials appeared glossy and pumped up, constructed with bland efficiency—in short, ready for a corporate atrium or plaza. And with corporate atria collapsing all around us (along with the coincident art market), one hopes for the return of the gravity of her past work, with its formal dexterity and surer sense of history, its excesses notwithstanding. —QUINN LATIMER