

# MITZI PEDERSON

I THINK I WAS LOOKING AT THAT BEFORE



WORLD CLASS BOXING  
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# INDEFINITE OBJECTS, TEMPORARY STABILITY

BY SARA KRAJEWSKI

A sculpture by Mitzi Pederson is an alluring paradox. Transparent cellophane twists brittle paneling into a gentle curve. Heavy blocks attached to a thin strip of molding ground it at one end and cause it to bow at the other. Glitter flickers on broken cinder blocks. In many of her works, Pederson balances the palpable tension between slight and weighted elements, transforming their offhand qualities into compelling and spare abstractions.

Pederson locates much of her materials in the aisles of the hardware store and in scrap heaps. She prefers to use the objects as she finds them; the occasional application of silver leaf, sand, or glitter lends reflectivity and texture. Her economic means (directed somewhat by chance) meet equally restrained gestures (informed by trial and error). While Pederson lets her chosen items be what they are, she tests their inherent strength by bending, folding, stacking, or suspending them. What initially appears to be a formal exploration of structural questions yields contemplative, often graceful works that investigate the containment and dissolution of energy as well as sculpture's thorny relationship with time.

For her exhibition at World Class Boxing, Pederson continues to explore these concerns. Yet here she has engaged them more expansively with distinctive, contrasting bodies of work. A large floor work comprised of cinder block fragments acts as a counterbalance to smaller, multipart sculptures of wood remnants, strips, and slats. With these, she sets up several oppositions — horizontal, vertical; heavy, light; durable, ephemeral — that move back and forth between the illusion of permanence and the impression of transience.

In conceiving the new cinder block sculpture, Pederson envisioned a wave breaking across the floor. Blue-gray glitter painted on the broken edges reflects light and evokes a rippling movement amidst the jagged forms. The allusions to water bring to mind the build up and dissipation of energy as if the forms have come to rest after a crest has subsided. Pederson describes the work as a “ground drawing,” which resonates with this impulse toward fluidity. But the overall grid pattern brings order, redoubled by the inherent structure of the basic building blocks. This perspective gives the work another, more literal reading as a “floor plan.”

By virtue of their architectural function, the cinder blocks readily imply this connection. Pederson embraces this inevitability. For instance, her 2005 sculpture *untitled (ten years later or maybe just one)* is another large-scale assembly of cinder block fragments resembling a dilapidated wall. No mortar holds it together, as one might expect for such a sizable construction. Instead Pederson puzzled the pieces to-

