

**Pederson in the Mission**

by Andrew Berardini

**Mitzi Pederson: I'll Start Again**

Ratio 3

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94103

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Marcel Duchamp may be the first to drag things out of the garbage, but his act was one of aggression; so bold and daring he didn't even put his name on it. He was merely asking us to reconsider the object of art. Many artists since then have been plying simple objects, putting them forward for artistic purposes. The artists of Arte Povera were trying to make art in the scale of life, using the materials of life. Minimalists, as Donald Judd once noted, were trying to make art that didn't look like art with all kinds of industrial materials as their chosen medium. Richard Tuttle, the first of the Unmonumentalists, used 'pathetic' materials playfully: paper, sting, cloth, wire, twigs, cardboard, etc, calling his constructions, driven by ideas, drawings rather than sculptures.

In recent years, simple objects (traditionally non-art objects, but a hundred years into the Ducampian Age, that characterization is beginning to feel a bit silly), have made their presence strongly felt, perhaps first as a rebellion against the big, expensive fabrications that were littering the art world (and that seemed to be endlessly snapped up by Russian oligarchs), and now perhaps as an antidote to the hangover of the Great Recession.

Mitzi Pederson's humble sculptures, though, could fit either description easily; but in truth, these sculptures feel as if they were created in a world all their own. Pederson uses mostly industrial materials, as if some nod to the power of industry with which the minimalists were fascinated. However, she couples this with Tuttle's lyrical delicacy, undercutting the modernist purity of the plywood box. Though other artists work in a similar mode, hers is one oddly bent towards something a little more fun, as if these things created themselves for the joy of doing so. The sculptures bend and turn through the air, heavy-ish-looking wall works are held up with simple string. Sand appears on many of the sculptures, often adding a bit of glitter and texture to her modest materials. Laid out on the rough-hewn floor, it looks like many of the objects have grown out of their surroundings, as if they literally crawled out of the wood work and through the passage of time evolved, rather than decayed, into the strange objects sprawled across the rooms. Pederson's sculptures appear as a radical evolution of simple things, creating a world of objects all its own.



--Andrew Berardini

(Images courtesy Ratio 3 and the artist: Mitzi Pederson, *Untitled*, 2009, Wood and sand, 10.5 x 28 x 13 inches; Mitzi Pederson, *I'll Start Again*, 2009, Installation view, Ratio 3 - San Francisco)

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