

Art in America

INTERNATIONAL • REVIEW

May 2009

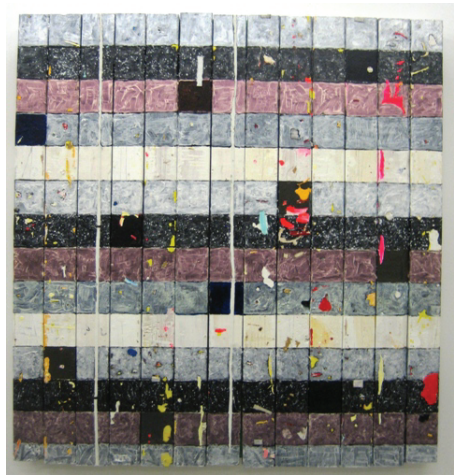
CORDY RYMAN
DCKT
by Stephen Mueller

Cordy Ryman's do-it-yourself esthetic is the visual equivalent of garage-band music. The work has a happy nonchalance and is spot-on in terms of color and scale. Using acrylic and materials at hand—wood (usually two-by-fours, some-times plywood), metal, shellac, Gorilla Glue, Velcro and enamel—the artist makes mostly medium-size wall-mounted paintings, but also pieces more closely akin to sculpture, all demonstrating his casual aplomb and willingness to invent.

Third Wave (2008), of variable dimensions but here installed in a version nearly 23 feet long and 8 feet high, resembles a dune fence. It is a long row of two-by-fours leaned against the wall, each divided roughly into thirds and painted in alternating bands of pale blue and two tones of Naples yellow. The artist gradually changes the angles of the boards against the wall, creating an undulating form. The edges and back sides of the boards are painted a Day-Glo red that creates a colored light between the back of the piece and the wall. This built-in reflectiveness is also used as a device in some of the wall-mounted works, where a painted top edge or side casts a tinted shadow on the wall.

Ryman also showed several stacked pieces, two of them situated in corners, made at lengths of lumber laid atop one another against the walls in a pyramidal configuration resembling a section of masonry, and a third, *Spring and Bowery* (96 by 96 by 21 inches), 2008-09, installed in the gallery window. Here two planes meet, one dark and foreshortened and the other, elongated and perpendicular to the first, and consisting mainly of multicolored blocks.

Another piece, *193 Stairs* (2008-09) presents a more random internal arrangement of rectangular painted blocks. Its parameters are in the form of a right triangle that echoes the shape of a high section of wall on which it was hung. The blocks are painted in different, sometimes highly contrasting colors, creating an optical flicker, and the edges, also painted, cast those glowing reflections on the wall. *Checker* (48 by 46 1/2 inches), 2008, looking more like a conventional painting, is made of lengths of lumber arranged in rows and painted mostly in gray tones, with an occasional black causing a rhythmic movement in both horizontal and vertical directions. Such works exude a sweet rightness, humor and simplicity reminiscent of the classic 3-minute pop song.



Cordy Ryman, *Checker*, 2008, acrylic & Velcro on wood, 48 x 46 1/2 x 3 1/2"