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CORDY RYMAN

By Roberta Smith

Cordy Ryman's show of home-spun abstract reliefs, corner sculptures and false walls — cobbled together mostly from wood, paint, glue, Velcro and staples — is one of the sleepers of the fall season.

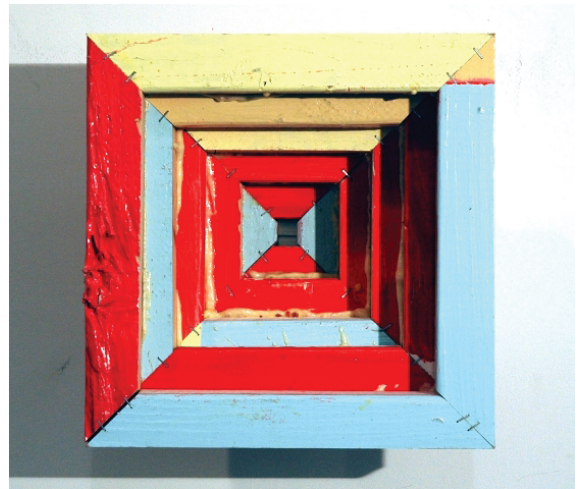
Mr. Ryman is a consummate recycler, even of his own art. Several works here are assembled from square dowels painted in pale shades of yellow and blue and a strong pink. The painted wood was salvaged from a large installation piece titled "Third Wave" that wound through Mr. Ryman's New York solo debut at this gallery in early 2009 like a cheerful dune fence.

Now it recurs in the pieces like "Double Echo Wave," "Wave Bias" and "Wave Hole," forming concentric squares or diagonal stripes whose patchy colors suggest Frank Stella's early work rethought by the great quiltmaker Rosie Lee Tompkins.

The order in which wood is painted, cut and constructed is in flux in Mr. Ryman's work, neatly obscuring the difference between found and made; thrown together and refined; or for that matter, formalist thinking and hands-on craft. "Red Bricks" fills the gallery's window with a wall built from scraps of wood painted various bright pinks and oranges; the overall randomness is undercut by the incisive heat of the palette.

"Gator Ghost," a small relief covered mostly with little triangles of wood placed perpendicular to one another, keeps you nicely off-balance. The three or four greens of the triangles may or may not be the artist's choice; then there's the odd illusion of bumpy, basketlike weaving they convey and finally the way their march is halted by a swath of yellow paint and a drawn graphite line, both laid down over white.

Mr. Ryman's sensibility has a heartening breadth. He's not always as good when he strays from the geometric, as suggested by "Bran," which seems thrown not so much together as up. But every artist needs room for improvement.



Cordy Ryman, *Wave Hole*, 2010, acrylic, enamel & Gorilla Glue on wood, 12 x 12 ½ x 7 ½"