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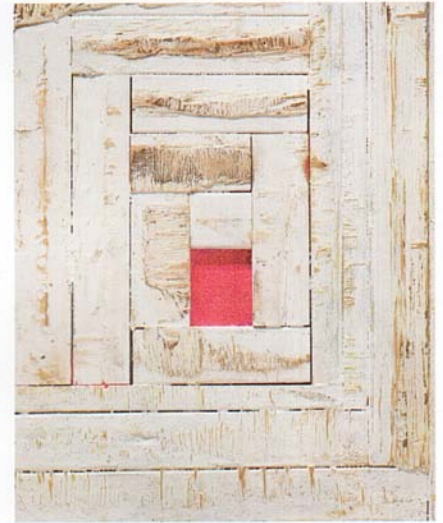
SUMMIT, NEW JERSEY

Cordy Ryman

Visual Arts Center of New Jersey // January 11–March 24

ONE HIGHLY PLEASURABLE aspect of Ryman's work is that just by looking at it, you can see how each piece was made. Humble and unpretentious, the 12 handmade, wall-mounted wooden objects in "Shuffle/Scrap/Echo" are fashioned from materials common to construction sites or a carpenter's shop: lumber; sawdust; acrylic and enamel paint; but also epoxy resin; urethane foam; and Velcro. Using neither tricks nor gimmicks when covering things with paint and gluing them together. Ryman tenders an art that is honest rather than factual, injecting a stale formalism with new life through a playful, idiosyncratic approach.

One large work, *Wave Echo Scrap Ghost*, 2012, comprises four squares with dozens of small, cut two-by-fours—seemingly odds and ends that were tossed aside—affixed to a plywood backing. Ryman haphazardly arranges the topography of each quadrant, with the assorted brick-sized chunks at bottom right daubed with pale lavenders and creamy aqua, and those at top left in shades of green, the facing surfaces of most blocks slathered in white. The upper right quarter incorporates primarily wedges the color of processed wood; the fourth section pops with primary colors.



Cordy Ryman, *Trim Core*, 2012, acrylic and enamel on wood, 24 x 22.25 inches

Ryman assembled *Wave Echo Scrap Ghost* from the leftovers of previously exhibited installations, so he's recycling his own, presumably unsold, work. He similarly reconfigured *Windowboxing* 2010/13, against a long wall, stacking several dozen rectangular frames built from two-by-fours in a jumbled triangular formation that nearly reaches the ceiling. The front edges and exterior sides of these frames are painted white, matching the drywall behind them, but the interior edges are coated with iridescent orange, pink, fuchsia, and yellow, as well as sunflower, red, and blue. Unlike the latter installation, a vertical column that is part of the room's architecture bisects *Windowboxing*, emphasizing how the artist can fluidly adapt an older work to a new situation.

The physical properties of materials, processes of construction, and sites of display all undeniably interest Ryman. But if his subject matter is unclear—if he has any at all—the works are satisfying nonetheless. There's a certain joy in the way distressed irregular slats surround a hot-pink center in *Trim Core*, 2012, or how the white, yellow, and blue sawdust circles in *Coil Sweeping*, 2012, radiate outward from an ovoid glob of milky paint. Free of the puritanical dogma and theoretical concerns typically associated with formalism, Ryman's work is casual, carefree, and fun.

—Christopher Howard