

ARTFORUM

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Cordy Ryman— *David Rhodes*

The twelve works in this exhibition hew to methods familiar to Cordy Ryman's 2010 solo show at DCKT Contemporary in New York—though in the present gathering, greater success is achieved both by the installation as a whole and in the individual pieces, showing Ryman to be really hitting his stride. His fluent constructions are built, cut, painted, dismantled, and reassembled out of scraps of material including wood, glue, staples, sawdust, Velcro, and reused unsuccessful or even completed work; the result is painting made with a sculptor's desire. Within only two years it has become possible to speak of a signature style in his work, and one within which, it is important to add, there is ample freedom for nuance, development, and change.



Cordy Ryman, *Windowboxing*, 2010/2013, acrylic and enamel on wood, dimensions variable.

Utilizing the eccentricities of the Visual Arts Center's large first-floor space—where there are few right angles and only two parallel walls, not to mention sloping floor-to-ceiling windows—Ryman positions the largest work, *Windowboxing*, 2010/2013, on either side of a vertical column (an architectural feature of the gallery). Here a stack of frames pegged to the wall form a ragged pyramid. Directly across from this painting-sculpture hybrid is a row of variously sized small paintings, the biggest of which is in the middle, creating a centered asymmetry echoing the structure of *Windowboxing*. Constant attention is paid by the artist to the edges of his works, as every surface is active. The change of perspective available to a viewer by simply walking by a work is integrated, for example, in *Windowboxing*: The inside edges are painted fluorescent pink, blue, yellow, orange, and purple, the facing edge white. Seen from an acute angle, the various hues create a color field, but when viewed from the front, the color is visible as ambient reflected light, on the wall itself, as the visual emphasis shifts onto the physical structure of the frames.

In *No Crossing 2*, 2009, the upper half of a wooden construction is painted with a broad red-orange horizontal "V," which is several inches forward of the lower half, so that the resulting shadow becomes an essential element of the composition. When Ryman's affinities for material and color converse, whether with deliberation or by happenstance, these painted constructions are at their best—and they call to mind a more vibrant and emotional version of the architecturally relational assemblages in Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbau*.