



Lionel Maunz, "Receipt of Malice"

Until Sun Apr 15

Bureau
127 Henry St, New York, 10002

Mon Apr 9 2012

Time Out says

Although postapocalyptic in tenor, Lionel Maunz's new series of weird, alluring sculptures resists definitive analysis. The gallery's tiny main space contains a long, compartmentalized vitrine housing a stalagmite-like mass on which rests a shiny, black ball. A series of mostly black objects, some shaped like rifle barrels, neatly sit on the top of the glass. The case itself is held aloft by thin, white columns erected around stepped configurations that vaguely recall Mayan pyramids.

Indeed, while these last bits look fantastical, they are actually scale models of the bunkers the artist's family built to escape the end times they believed were coming in the mid-1980s. Even without the biographical background, the current doomsday hysteria (if you haven't heard, the world ends this year) makes the work seem creepily current.

Next door, four gothic vertical sculptures share a recurring motif: inverted obelisks suspended as a series of diminishing directional forms. In *Phantom Capstone*, for instance, a large black obelisk points to a smaller one made of crystal and so on, until eventually the piece tapers to the cast of a foot resting on an L-shaped object atop a silver block. Yet no narrative can be deduced from these elements, as they accumulate into a whole.

That combination of mystery and familiarity haunts the show. Maunz's work is reminiscent of David Altmejd's in its strangeness, of Matt Hoyt's in its archeological whatnots, and of that of CoBrA's Constant in its melding of existential angst and anthropological excavation. Intimations of physical abuse also bring to mind Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, as if these highly detailed—if at times overwrought—sculptures were delicate edifices of fear.—*Nana Asfour*