

# ARTFORUM

## Libby Rothfeld

### BUREAU

178 Norfolk Street

November 5–December 17

Libby Rothfeld's exhibition here, "Noon and Afternoon," is chock-full of vessels not exactly yearning to be filled. Ruined cardboard boxes prop up seemingly flimsy laminate desk legs in *Desk / System* (all works 2017). Several empty and half-empty plastic water bottles sit atop the table and other sculptures in the show. Many of her titles include the word "system," as if there's some kind of steadfast order that needs to be reckoned with in these existentially unsettled and haunted objects. Both *Rack / System* and *Chair / System* are geometric, quasifunctional support structures for clothes that have been enshrouded by dry-cleaning bags. Seen together, they lament the roteness of adult professionalism: Bland garments in various shades of anemic yellow and dead chocolate—with the requisite white dress shirt—reinforce a horrible sense of status quo.

A water bottle fits perfectly in the top slot of *Bulletin Board #1*, a wall-mounted block on which there are two paper receipts, drawings of an outstretched hand, and inset Plexi-prints of bizarre sushi ads buried under clear packing tape. None of it looks particularly important, or appetizing. The words and images feel like traces of random thoughts, things that want to be special enough to be recollected but aren't. *Hand (Mask)*, a vinyl print of the phrase "Butternut squash x 3" written in pen on an open palm, is embellished by a goofy monkey-face mask fashioned from Ultracal. The print isn't crisp; the mask is crude. Rothfeld is not beholden to perfection—her works embrace the homely, cast-off, and ordinary. But the artist creates an exceptional gestalt from her unapologetically "dumb" items and sources—a body of work that very much deserves to be remembered.



Libby Rothfeld, *Bulletin Board #1*, 2017, laminate, water bottle, UV Plexi-prints, charcoal, tape, paper, thumb tack, 37 x 37 1/2 x 5".

— Yin Ho