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## MATT HOYT

### Art in General, New York

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The surfaces of Matt Hoyt's minute sculptures are distressed by scratches that serve to show both the carving and grafting required during the meticulous process of making each one. The materials used, while appearing natural, include adhesives, polyurethane and wood filler.

In his show at Art in General, a number of pieces – the largest around ten centimetres long, but most only three cm<sup>2</sup> or so – were carefully laid on black shelves at approximately waist height on three walls of a space (named the Musée Minuscule) big enough to accommodate only one person at a time. Each grouping has a title of its own, including: *Group 133 – Together* (2013–15), *Group 134 – Shared Axis* (2013–15) or *Group 136 – New Seeds* (2014–15). The titles befit the physical presence of the works, whose forms hint at enigmatic jetsam, talismans or historic fragments. Hoyt spends long periods working on his sculptures, lending them imaginative reach as embodiments of accumulated time or experience: their appeal is not purely physical. Hoyt himself prefers to shield his work from either tactile or tacit definitions. He has said of this ongoing series: 'The pieces are never the execution of a technique nor the expression of any clear and logical idea or concept; they simply are.'

Nevertheless, the works invite scrutiny; their apparently arbitrary shapes are more refined than they might first appear. For instance, *Group 135 – Bronze Rings* (2015) is a pair of grey sculptures, each of which has a fairly large, evenly-sized hole through the middle, one flanked by two rounded protrusions that curve down slightly, making the object stand up. A neck-like stem makes as if to extend purposefully from the top of the object, but has been flattened off to a wide stump; a vague burnt discolouration seeps round it into the grey of the rest, which has been heavily scored with scratches. Around the hole is a lighter patina. Its companion piece lacks a stunted stem, with three of the rounded, paddle-like protrusions surrounding a central hole that faces forwards rather than up. Guided by a different principle, the three works comprising *Group 137 – Here to There* (2015) have no holes. The central and simplest one is



pebble-like: a piebald object in grey and white. The two at either side are tripartite, vaguely suggesting primitive shapes of birds with tapered wings or fins. The subtlety of these works lies not in their surfaces or shapes, but in the character of minor inclinations or curves, the depth of a dip or the gradient of an orifice.

Anomalous to the remainder of the exhibition for its complexity and size, *Group 134 – Shared Axis* (2013–15) comprises two sculptural pieces: one with tapering points that correspond geometrically to the positioning of holes in the centre of the object; the other a three-dimensional rhombus, its sides cut away into limbs with four holes at the central point between the opposite tapering ends. What, we are given to wonder, is the relationship between *Group 134 – Shared Axis* and the smaller works? Do the larger sculptures carry a certain superiority of function or merit an enhanced level of attention from the artist?

Combining both composition and erosion, Hoyt's working process is one of intense physical labour. This formal determination is at once admirable and peculiar. Here, re-discovering the allure of small objects, I am prompted to recall Gaston Bachelard, who recognized the 'dynamic virtues of miniature', in which values are engulfed.

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