

ARTFORUM

New York

Matt Hoyt

BUREAU

127 Henry Street

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Minutely arranged on a number of unobtrusive shelves, Matt Hoyt's sculptural works appear as art as if by incidence: Each seems to resemble cast-off flotsam one might typically kick about while wandering through a train yard or a former industrial lot. This may lead an inattentive viewer into mistaking Hoyt for a rarified variant of the urban archaeologist, classing findings according to a cryptically individuated set of aesthetic criteria.

Yet close scrutiny soon reveals these works as the product of an immersive craft. Amalgams of putty, clay, paint, plaster, resin, and a number of mercurial materials (Plasti Dip and liquid electrical tape, to note two) come together as assemblies of qualities that just slip past familiarity. One could liken them (as mentioned above) to fractured artifacts or even lilliputian architecture, but such feats of metaphor and metonymy only manage to kick up a flurry of linguistic dust about this art and its irreducible material processes, evoking the philosophical joke of consciousness's bungled attempt to ambush the thing itself in order to understand it.

In this sense, Hoyt's work continues the tradition of sculpture as a spatial event unfolding in time. As a presence offered through the contemplative folding of matter and form, Hoyt's works assume a surprisingly quiet tongue for contemporary art—a cultural apparatus whose hypertrophic discourse has reached such a point that it is not uncommon to find the leased goods of a Hollywood prop house articulated as artistic product. This is not to imply that such a cultural condition is one for great social concern; rather, it is a useful context to appreciate the elusive techniques through which Hoyt's objects come into being. Skirting just below the facets of the known, this exhibition offers the average consumer of contemporary art an instance of presence that discloses only the limits of its intelligibility.



Matt Hoyt, *Untitled (Group 18)*, 2006–11, wooden shelf with ABS support, clay, putty, acrylic, tempera paint, 1 x 8 1/2 x 4 3/4".

— Sam Pulitzer