

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

Friday, October 10, 2014

New York

Dave Hardy

CHURNER AND CHURNER

205 Tenth Avenue

September 18–November 1

There's a great tradition of garbage art, from Kurt Schwitters's collage and assemblage works and the Situationists' reconfigurations of trash culture to Rachel Harrison's and Isa Genzken's brilliantly mean-spirited monuments to the nastiness of late capitalism. And then there's Dave Hardy, whose formal, poetic coordinates within this realm fall rather elegantly between Apollonian facture and unadulterated abjection.

Hardy's primary materials for all six works in this exhibition are scavenged panels of glass and cast-off chunks of cheap, desiccated furniture foam (think the appointments of an especially low-budget porn or fittings of a local welfare office). The foam is dipped into cement and manipulated into lugubrious, voluptuous folds and fleshy mounds that call to mind both the contrapposto of classical figurative statuary and heaps of modernist sculpture gone to seed. Hardy's materials are precariously leaned and balanced—connective supports being virtually absent, rather clever feats of engineering and careful uses of gravity keep these works hanging solidly together.

There's also a pathos that imbues this family of sculptures—one can feel its spirit most acutely in the various bits of homely detritus embedded in the works' surfaces. It's in the dumb pretzel or shitty glue stick dangling from *Destiny* (all works 2014); the disused car lighter that was surely culled from some sad stripe of Honda circa 1982 (*Lighgths*); or that feeble erection of pink pencil jutting out of *Cutout*. It's these seemingly off-the-cuff applications of little junk that heighten the vulnerability of these works, like knives into a fairy-tale beast, and cause the obdurate "thingness" of Hardy's objects to melt here and there into moments of broken love and tenderness.



Dave Hardy, *Cutout*, 2014, glass, cement, polyurethane foam, tint, tape, pencil, 9 x 11 x 7".

— Alex Jovanovich