

CHURNER *and* CHURNER

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Art Review: Gallery exhibitions of Dave Hardy, Matthew Ritchie and Sam Durant

The Poetry of Stuff and Abstract Navigation

By PETER PLAGENS

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Dave Hardy: The Hairy Hand Churner and Churner

Churner and Churner

205 10th Ave., (212) 675-2750

Through Nov. 1

Not a little sculpture these days is cobbled together from variegated materials like those employed by Dave Hardy (b. 1969): sheets of glass, polyurethane foam, cement, tape, pencils, Sharpie markers and, in one case, a diving board. But only a few artists know how to use odd ingredients the way adventuresome chefs do—choosing and mixing them to come up with unexpected and surprisingly tasty dishes. Mr. Hardy is one who does. The half-dozen offhandedly cohesive, casually beautiful objects in this small exhibition in an intimately proportioned Chelsea gallery are an uplifting lesson in what might be called the poetry of stuff.

“Exes” (2014), a tabletop sculpture about a foot in each dimension, is a delicious morsel of line, mass and levitation. The muted knockout “Destiny,” also from this year, stands 94 inches tall; in it, Mr. Hardy horizontally folds lengths of foam (at one juncture a marker, functioning as a tiny tent pole, keeps them apart), stacks them atop two sheets of glass that look like the fat legs of an early videogame creature, and leans the whole pastel assemblage against a gallery wall. The result is an unobtrusively anthropomorphic sculpture that is equal parts daring, finesse and visual humor.

The sculptures, incidentally, were partially assembled in the gallery, which, odd as it may sound, even smells good.