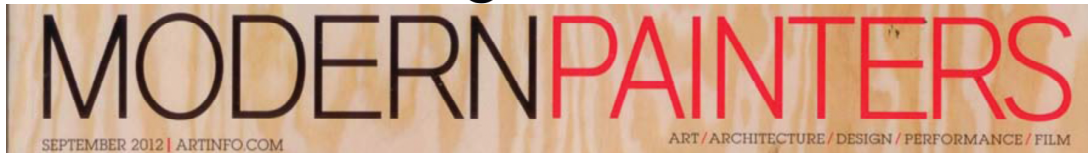


Eleven Rivington

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MICHAEL DELUCIA ELEVEN RIVINGTON, NEW YORK

By Karen Archey



The contemporary art game is dictated by the new, often times guiltily so. We're always looking for the latest this, the most up-to-date that, ad infinitum, ad nauseam. Yet it's equally self-evident that the new is as useful insofar as it is relevant, self-aware, and perspicacious. The 1990's, for example, saw Mark Dion's genre-defying reinvention and appropriation of scientific displays and Kara Walker's racially charged silhouette installations. Today finds Michael DeLucia's rough-hewn ply-wood abstract relief's that

might appear equally at home on a hard-hat site as in a white-cube gallery. Employing standard materials such as wood and paint, DeLucia has nonetheless created an aesthetic processes and a working method that are unwaveringly idiosyncratic and new, through their significance has yet to be parsed.

DeLucia's second solo show at Eleven Rivington (which also marks the inaugural exhibition of the gallery's second space) comprises around 10 four-by-eight-foot plywood panel reliefs installed side by side. The effect is not unlike an urban construction site, though the quality of the individually painted panels bears an uncanny resemblance to a vintage halftone screen print, or even an Op-art moiré, with an obvious gesture toward Gordon Matta-Clark's building splits. Digital renderings are carved into the wood with a mechanized arm (otherwise known as a CNC machine), the resulting effect appearing both handmade and digital. Like rings on a

tree, each sheet of plywood varies in its composition, reacting to the CNC machine differently, which accounts for the hand crafted effect. One body of work begins with unadulterated plywood cut and overlaid with basic yellow paint; other panels are pasted with posters one would usually find littering boarded-up building lots, again referring to that specific locus.

But what do they mean? One can't help but think about the idea of built space, specifically the cordoning public walls that separate and protect people from buildings being built or torn down. Whereas an artist like Klara Liden would source actual construction material to ruminate on public space and private alienation, DeLucia makes reference to the former via his chosen materials while complicating that signifier by introducing machinery into his works, through without clear ends. How do the digital renderings relate to the idea of built space and the artist's chosen material? While a clear-cut answer (no pun intended) remains to be seen, he is certainly onto something.