

Geha, Katie, *Critic's Pick*, Artforum, November 15, 2011

Colby Bird

11.14.11

AUTHOR: KATIE GEHA

09.09.11-11.26.11 Lora Reynolds Gallery

Parts of wooden chairs, small blocks of broken granite, brightly painted flattened cardboard boxes, a photograph of Easter eggs, and fruit, both real and plastic, are largely what Colby Bird's current exhibition is made of. While all of these materials retain and assert their identities as everyday things in the world, Bird proposes that the object's function as art is determined less by its media than by its proximity to other works and by the viewer's own subjectivity.

Bird presents these objects in rigorously arranged tableaux that make them feel effortless and light in their relationship to one another. A group of three sculptures are placed on a large wooden plank in the center of the gallery. Each work is a meditation on balance: For instance, a looped metal sculpture sits atop a plastic pear, and a detached wooden chair leg rests precariously on an orange. The sculptures challenge the mind to make patterns as it registers the work. All of the components are distinguishable, but when viewed together, the effect is not unlike looking at a cubist collage. The objects may be changed by their placement, yet they always retain their "objectness."

The exhibition has an interactive component as well; with the help of the gallery attendant, the viewer can rearrange a selection of works on a wooden table that juts out of the wall, which serves as a site for photographs to be placed and replaced. The viewer becomes a cocurator, as each photo activates the space in startlingly new ways. Through a constant consideration of placement and out of a wide range of materials, Bird has assembled an elegant and cohesive exhibition.