

Partisan Review

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At the Galleries

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Old pros may have claimed pride of place in the fall season, but young hopefuls were showcased in *Building Structures* at P.S. 1, a selection of work by fifteen young sculptors from New York and abroad who, according to the curators, “re-stage the context and principles of architectural techniques.” Some employed what must be called building languages. Some used materials associated with ordinary things and constructions. Some invoked place. All seemed to take as their point of departure, more or less explicitly, the phenomena and objects of our surroundings. Many works, alas, were overly literal or just plain trivial. Simply displacing domestic cabinetry, however beautifully made, or a shop awning, however schematized, does not automatically make it compelling as sculpture, nor does gathering the detritus of packaging or what have you into haphazard arrangements.

A few works, however, were notable both for their conviction and invention. The Dutch sculptor Lara Schnitger’s playful, precarious skeletal forms, wrapped with boldly patterned fabric, evoked the figure more than the built environment, but they had presence and charm. Ross Knight’s wonky aluminum and vinyl structure, like a three-dimensional drawing, was one of the few works in the show to make use of symmetry without appearing simply to have settled for the condition. A second, smaller piece, was more “artful” and less surprising. Knight’s larger sculpture, at once wagon-like, ceremonial, and inexplicable, was one of the strongest in the show. Another standout, the most inventive and most fully sculptural work in *Building Structures*, both formally and in terms of making the physical character of materials expressive, was newcomer Karlis Rekevics’s installation in plaster and wood. A casual-seeming stack of plaster slabs, some unexpectedly swollen and notched vertical walls, and a couple of strategically placed light bulbs became a metaphorical distillation of the least romantic aspects of urban place, transformed by a simultaneously sensuous, rough material palette. Rekevics is someone to watch with attention.