

Lyles & King

Michael DeLucia

Standing Water

November 13 - January 29

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 13, 3-6pm

Outdoor Sculpture Space at 21 Catherine Street

These three new works by Michael DeLucia are sculpture, but also what happens before and after sculpture. Like maquettes, the plywood volumes are low-polygon abbreviations of everyday geometries—a floating oil drum, a sunken tire, a trash can standing in water. Their surfaces, by contrast, recollect screenshots of the same models in dense, debossed lines like a woodblock waiting to be inked. It's a studied, intentional confusion of base materials and traditional modes of making within the envelope of computer aided modeling and milling

The combined effect is a drama between shape and surface: blank and hyper-detailed. A quivering experience held out for a moment to the viewer, suspended between the simplicity of shape and the complexity of beholding it.

For DeLucia, this speaks to today's facts of screen-based perception but also to certain strains of Pop Art and Minimalism—Claus Oldenburg, Anthony Caro, Tony Smith—that probed the strangeness of encountering everyday forms with our own, idiosyncratic minds' eye. Taken together, this lineage insists that everything is a sculpture. Or more precisely that sculpture isn't a thing at all. It's an occasion. A moiré of making and seeing, sending and receiving, that's never fixed and never over.

Here that premise is redoubled in a kind of perceptual game: each of DeLucia's forms is bisected at hip-height by an invisible plane that warps bottom half as if seen through water. Sandy, Henri, Ida. Maybe it takes less and less imagination for us to look around at the stuff of our lives and imagine how it would look half-submerged. If so, add it to DeLucia's uncanny brand of realism—effects taken from life and its technical extensions that seem strange in large part because we have quickly come to accept them as given. New ways of seeing no less weird or certain than the rising water that laps at our feet.

—A.E. Benenson