

RHONA HOFFMAN GALLERY

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The Entwining of Image and Object: Richard Rezac's Sculpture

Richard Rezac at Luhring Augustine Chelsea

531 West 24th Street, between 10th and 11th avenues
New York City, luhringaugustine.com



Installation shot of Richard Rezac's show at Luhring Augustine Chelsea, with *Chigi*, 2017 in the foreground

A drawing in a project room of Richard Rezac's solo exhibition this summer at Luhring Augustine was at once plan and elevation, as elegant as it was documentary—but of what, the viewer might ask? Provisionally it be called a thingmabob.

On consideration, one can discover a legitimate way of naming these works, as Rezac's catalogue essayist Graham Bader does, as the *entwining* object and image. This set of terms is more than merely felicitous. "Object" and "image" are not mere words chosen at random but key terms in the history of ideas through which significant aesthetic ideologies have fought for creative co-existence. (Put differently: not all things are art; criteria matter.) When Donald Judd speaks of objects, what gives his reductive modernism force is that Constructivist engineering has informed his thinking, a certain narrative by which sculpture is non-trivial. Or, when André Breton and Aimé Césaire speak of an image, they are wielding the instrumentality of Surrealism to get at psychological and political resistance and revolt. No mere juxtaposition will do: under the rule of metamorphosis, sense becomes other: a kind of signifying non-sense, or otherwise, an annealing synthesis.



Richard Rezac, *Chigi, Pamphili*, 2019. Aluminum, painted cast bronze, woven cotton, 25-1/2 x 26-1/2 x 10-1/2 inches. . Courtesy of Luhring Augustine

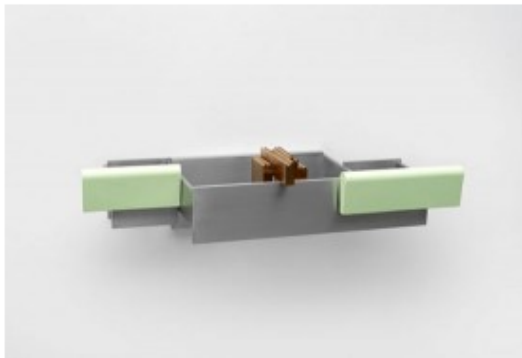
The relevance of object-image to Rezac's works is spot-on. What should be frivolous in his art is not, because the object's physical properties forge a connection through strong antinomies. The image comes into sharp enigmatic focus through an unapologetic assertion of difference. Take *Soliloquy* (2019) for example. In some parallel universe, a carpenter's workbench and underground grain vaults cohabit, and the resulting tool plays a practical role. Another work, *Untitled (19-05)* (2019) consists of a table atop of which is some sort of dune. If this artifact coheres it is owing to an unsaid force whereby heavy rectilinear gravity is tipped toward image by an unshapely shape atop it. Of the considerable inventiveness typical of Rezac, perhaps the least effective is the most apparently inventive: the suspended piece, *Chigi, Pamphili*, (2019), an assemblage with three elements that remain unassimilated and, hence, rather twee.

Relief assumes the orientation of painting yet with the rights and privileges of sculpture. Through the binding of painting with sculpture comes a certain gravitas, as with the cast bronze *Untitled (18-06)* (2018).

The causes are clear. Small as most of this sculptor's works are, the size of this piece is not diminutive as it falls within the viewer's normal sight lines. And even so, smaller than most paintings typically are, this relief and almost all others, draws the view close, enlarging the subtly calibrated craft for engaged perception. Rezac's choice of scale, then, brings material and technique into view as a constructed intensity embedded in planarity. Relief is sculptural compression. Here lies the force of its construct. Tension between technologies is a content of that construct, a kind of agon despite the patterning — Indeed, because of it, given that Rezac flaunts ornamentally and structurally extremes in the same . *Untitled (19-11)* (2019) .Why can its overt decoration of the diaper pattern seem engaged between clamps? Think of the suction cups for footpads of a gecko on a tree branch.



Richard Rezac, *Untitled (19-11)*, 2019. Painted wood, aluminum, 45 x 61-3/4 x 1-1/4 inches. Courtesy of Lühring Augustine



Richard Rezac, *Soliloquy*, 2019. Aluminum, cast bronze, painted cast aluminum, 9-1/4 x 34 x 13 inches. Courtesy of Lühring Augustine