

Solo exhibition by Michael DeLucia opens at Galerie Nathalie Obadia Brussels.
Monday, November 10, 2014



BRUSSELS.- Galerie Nathalie Obadia Brussels presents the fourth solo exhibition by Michael DeLucia in Europe since their first collaboration in 2008.

The twenty or so works on show represent the latest artistic research by this young American artist. The readymade objects that were the subject of his last exhibition here are supplanted by virtual models of natural forms, removed from a readymade substrate of formica laminated plywood through his computer aided modeling and carving process.

Playing with 3D modeling software, Michael DeLucia manipulates virtual objects that he collects “readymade” from online stock model libraries, usually used by architects, film or animated movie makers, and video game makers. The digital forms are stretched and compressed to fit within the prescribed bounds of the standardized 4’ x 8’ formica/plywood sheets. Then the virtual objects are translated into the physical world by a computer controlled router which, by carving the plywood, removes their form from the volume of the sheet material. The result is an impression of an object which never existed yet which penetrates the simulated materiality of the faux stone formica, revealing the physical reality of the natural wood beneath.

Two new subjects, those of clouds and rocks, allow Michael DeLucia to further his research into digital sculptural abstraction. Once processed through his software, the clouds and stones which are complete opposites in their natural state (gas/solid), lose their distinctive properties and become astonishingly similar in their digital state. This comparison highlights the disassociation and recomposition of physical properties that digital sculptural process involves. This transformation is a compelling source of confusion and importunes the viewer visually, physically and mentally.

Under the aegis of the phenomenology, this three-faceted experience has its roots in New British sculpture, which, from Henry Moore to Tony Cragg, invented a new plastic language that is primarily sensorial. Following this common thread, Michael DeLucia – the “first sculptor of virtuality” in the words of Pierre Sterckx – continually investigates the tenuous boundary between the material and the virtual, between the physical object and its digital manifestation. It is an intuitive exploration that Michael DeLucia likens to Plato’s Allegory of the Cave. In this famous metaphor, Human beings believe that they can gain access to the Truth thanks to their senses. It was, of course, an elusive quest for the Greek philosopher ; while for the American visual artist it is a simulacrum of reality.

Michael DeLucia uses trompe-l’oeil to exalt this new series of works. Their untreated plywood support – a reference to Arte Povera which also employed humble materials – is enhanced by the laminate sheet coloured to imitate marble, granite, agate and other colorful stones. Their chromatic turbulence introduces a new layer of abstraction that draws the viewer to reconstruct the motif mentally and subjects him to an additional experience of the form, which tends to extend beyond the structural limits of the sculpture or panel of wood.

The use of formica, like that of Richard Arstwager (1923-2013) in the 60’s, in combination with playful use of common objects similar to Claes Oldenburg (1929), establishes a historic link with Pop Art. A second association is apparent with the Minimal Art of Sol Lewitt and Donald Judd through the use of basic geometric forms such as the sphere and cube applied to basic materials in order to appropriate their materiality.

The carefully crafted effect on forms directly inspired by nature, which Michael DeLucia has realized for the first time in his Brussels exhibition, offers the artist new directions that are both formal and sensorial, which bring the viewer face to face with the tangible and virtual duality of the real world.

Michael DeLucia’s monographic catalogue will be published in spring 2015 and will be immediately followed by the first solo exhibition devoted to his work by a museum, at the MCA (Museum of Contemporary Art) in Santa Barbara in summer 2015.

More Information: [http://artdaily.com/index.asp?int_sec=2&int_new=74224#.VGFVHcwFW5\[/url\]](http://artdaily.com/index.asp?int_sec=2&int_new=74224#.VGFVHcwFW5[/url])
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