

...might be good

Andy Coolquitt: *iight*
Lisa Cooley, New York
Through November 16, 2008
by Arnaud Gerspacher

Immediately entering Andy Coolquitt's intimate solo show at Lisa Cooley, the gallery goer comes face-to-face with a thin assemblage of suspended metal rods in the shape of a wide-angled upside down "V" with fat light-bulbs emanating a soft glow out each end. The metal rods, which taper gradually, are alternatively painted red, off-white and blue, making the work, *hold on to me* (2008), seem a distant metallic and electric cousin to a Broodthaers (elbow) bone. Whether or not this work, along with the rest of the show, is as political is a question worth pondering.

Not in question is the beautiful and delicate tension Coolquitt's various light-bulb structures evoke. Of the 15 works on display, 7 are variations of the one described above. The crucial difference is their positioning in the gallery. Unlike the suspended *hold on to me*, the rest are propped up throughout the space. The resulting contact between the light bulbs, the wall—and in some cases the floor or the ceiling—is truly affective. In *wink wink* (2008), two metal rods with light-bulbs at each end casually lean against the wall and stand on the floor. There is nothing casual, however, about the resulting tension: the weight of one end presses down on its light source, as if its bulb might burst at any moment, while the opposite end counteracts this tension in a flush, buoyant relationship with the wall. In the middle of the gallery, a single metal rod, *1 thru 10* (2008), curves slightly as it rises from the floor to make light-bulb contact with the ceiling. Off to the side and leaning against the wall is the work from which the show draws its title, *iight* (2008), a "U" shaped variant of *hold on to me*. On the other side, *21st century aggressive carpet growth* (2008), is a single rod draped by an oppressively dingy carpet with light-bulbs bracing both ends. In each case, there is a play of contact between the work and the physical space, a play that makes the viewer wonder whether the illuminative energy comes from inside the work, or is somehow magically activated by the contact itself: in short, a play between materiality and poetry.

All the works are bricolages of mundane found objects, but not all are plug-in-able. Coolquitt includes rods with irreverently sculpted middle fingers at each end, a stout block of wood masked by a paper bag, and a liquid-filled malt liqueur bottle with a chain of drinking straws jutting out the mouth and rising up in the air, just to name a few. Balancing out the show, these objects seem to be props in a ritual long-since forgotten, or private meanings long-since inaccessible. Or, more simply, they are objects normally relegated to dumpsters and basements now salvaged and given renewed meaning. In a time of heightening eco-politics, this logic of recycling should seem timely. And if this review began with a begged political question, the answer might come in the form of this litter(al) return of repressed objects, and in the form of light-bulb sculptures that seem to sustain themselves through connections and currents of energy endlessly looping from one end to the other. Coolquitt's work may very well be at once a material display and poetic polemic for clean, renewable energies, with, quite naturally, no drilling involved.

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