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Kristen Mordin, *There Goes My Everything* (2018). Courtesy of the artist and Denk.

DENK:

CONCEPTUAL CRAFT II

by John David O'Brien ·

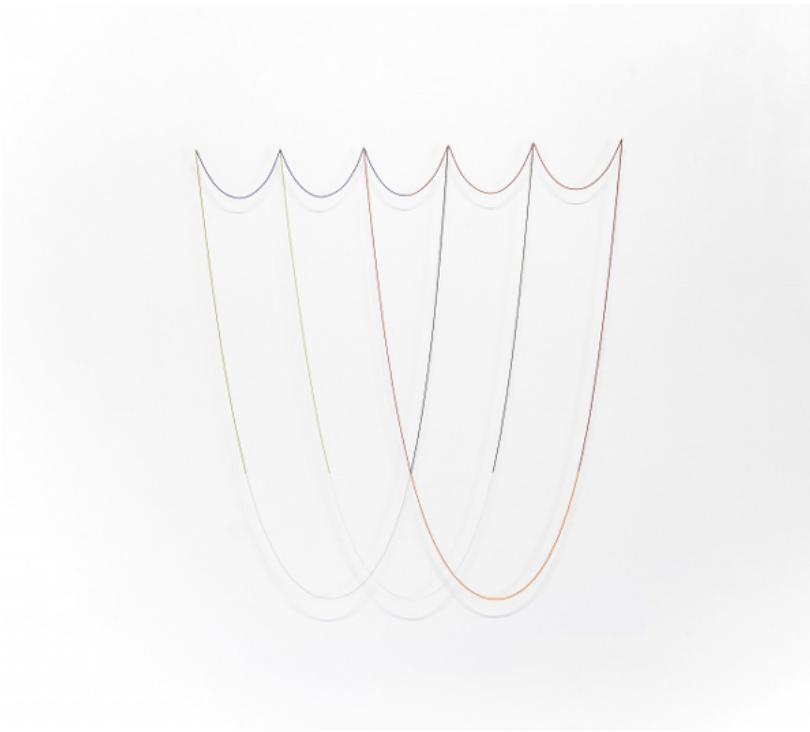
July 24, 2018 · in



Imagining an art object made entirely without thought and therefore completely physical is a fascinating exercise. On the other hand, trying to imagine as art something that was entirely wrought by thought without a physical trace (and therefore practice) is equally challenging. “Conceptual Craft” seeks to merge the traditions of quote-unquote fetish finish artwork with the traditions of thought-provoking art that often comes under the rubric of conceptual. The exhibition ultimately demonstrates that these categories are no longer mutually exclusive and should not be held as antithetical.

While we mull that over, we can look at the woodwork of Ross Rudel; for example, *Blue Stripe* (2016), in which very elaborate and yet somewhat minimal interventions combine to make an object whose mystery is more than just the sheer physicality of the work. What is the 6-foot span of precariously situated wood column headed towards?

Ross Rudel, *Blue Stripe* (2016). Courtesy of the artist and Denk.



George Stoll, *Untitled (11 lengths of colored beads on 6 pins forming 3 large and 5 small catenary curves)*, 2014. Courtesy of the artist and Denk.

We could debate how the very beautiful, ethereal wall works laid out by George Stoll—for instance, *Untitled (11 lengths of colored beads on 6 pins forming 3 large and 5 small catenary curves)*, 2014, with its arching curvilinear delineations, where thinner or larger strands of beads create both patterns in-and-of-themselves and on the wall below with the object's shadow—constitute an ex novo artwork, or is primarily a spatial manipulation of existing forms. And in that carefully calibrated spatial operation, a very clear tongue-in-cheek is inserted, thus creating an even larger gap in clarity about the difference between the actual making and the thinking of the making.



Kristen Morgan, *Death Wish and Pierre Who Didn't Care* (2018). Courtesy of the artist and Denk.

Or we can trip out on Kristen Morgan's unfired clay works, like *There Goes My Everything* (2018), or *Death Wish and Pierre Who Didn't Care* (2018), which unless you're able to touch them, look very much like the cassette tapes, magazines and paperback books that they have been fashioned after. The placement of these very nostalgic-ish objects on a plinth-like table underscores the wonderfully uneasy relationship that epitomizes this exhibition. It excavates how concept and craft co-exist, intermingle and yet still conflict with one another.



Rachel Lachowicz, *C Lycra Knit* (2018). Courtesy of the artist and Denk.



Tim Ebner, *Untitled* (2018). Courtesy of the artist and Denk.



Gioj de Marco, *REPLICA OF CONFESSIONAL CENTRAL SECTION - CINEMA PROP F1-1808 A* (2018). Courtesy of the artist and Denk.

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“Conceptual Craft II,” July 14 – August 18, 2018, at
Denk, 749 E Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

www.denkgallery.com