

When telling people this exhibition title: ODDLY, many react with wrinkled brow and consternation. They look quite ill at ease. "What?" they often ask. "*Oddly*," I repeat.

Oddly conveys a sense of the oblique, something wedged uncomfortably amongst the norm. It wears a badge of disruption while inviting curiosity. This wrongness emits beguile. Come peek and see. *Oddly* suggests and fosters contemplation and wonderment at many new levels. Situation, value and context are all to be measured and evaluated by this peculiar sense.

This exhibition presents the work of four Los Angeles artists: Greg Colson, Lilla LoCurto, Ross Rudel and Daniel Wheeler. Each artist mines their own particular and unusual vein. While the work of each artist stands unique, I feel their work as combined here can form a curious interplay.

A pregnant sense of irony and inversion is characteristic in the work of all four artists. The work is layered and elusive. Multiple readings are inferred. A strange resonance comes from all their visions. A heightened sense of the "in-between" exists. Stretched meanings and references pull and suggest. The viewer is enveloped in this limbo examination; a limbo of recognition, fear, memory and reverie. New codes of beauty are slyly suggested. This work, if only tantalizing and arbitrary, would not succeed; its success is its odd air that resonates; its off-setting aura that compels and challenges us as viewer/participants.

Ross Rudel's solitary forms reverberate a disquieting presence. They contain an eerie pose, a subverted purity. Their placement on the wall is deliberate, using the wall as mystical arena and field. Rudel's objects are strangely precious in their making. Their taut craft heightens secret. The seductive materials are stained wood, enamels, stretched nylon and stretched rubber. These are very visceral works. Texture and surface are key elements, inviting and repelling our senses. Their scale also contributes to this protracted sense of remove. The scale seems out of reach. The mysteries of these objects always seem slightly beyond grasp. The shadowed memory or allusion becomes the available grasp.

There is a secret eroticism to these forms. They hint at solitary ritual. The shapes suggest the body. Beauty, sex and fear all lurk beneath these seductive surfaces. They are potent metaphors of our time, loaded with questions of our culture and ourselves. Sex, censorship, perfection, secret and desire are all implicit issues. I am reminded of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs of flowers—posed elegant and beautiful, but with a foreboding and frightful perfection. Rich dualities lurk in Rudel's work. Their magic and elegance contribute a shrill echo. It is indeed difficult to hide from the beauty and disturbance of these haunting objects.

