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Pauline M'barek



Martin Boyce



Round Three  
September 13 – October 30  
Opening September 12  
19:00 – 22:00

Open Friday and Saturday  
13:00 – 18:00  
or by appointment

Please direct press inquiries  
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In FLEX's Round Three the Glaswegian Turner-prize winner Martin Boyce presents the object and Cologne-born Pauline M'barek the means with which to view it. Together they begin a dialogue about positive and negative space. Although any of the six steel *Trophy Stands* (2011) might be the stand for Boyce's *There are Places* (2009), M'barek's reliance on absence contrasts Boyce's layering of presences, and each makes a critical point about the art of interpretation.

*There are Places* blends nature and architecture, bird and box, face and mask. Surrealism and modernism entertain each other yet neither dominates the form. Instead, Boyce's characteristically broad syntax of remembered images breaks down; his work retains a sense of fragility. In fact constructed primarily from wooden whisky caskets, the bird box stares blankly from its stand. As the artist notes, "consigned to memory [my installations] become further abstracted or simplified..." Boyce's web of loosely connected forms and in the case of *There are Places*, lack of traceable history, allows the artist to show how casually contemporary culture picks up and discards its references. The object at hand - a bird box? a mask? - is forgotten then remembered anew. The sculpture's feigned primitive quality, for example, underlines habits of distance: the further one grows from the place and origin of an object, the sooner one declares it exotic.

Pauline M'barek's *Trophy Stands* assume exoticism with full force. Boyce's intentional simplification of a mask-like form is taken to the extreme, so much so that only the hypothetical stands remain. Though based on the artist's studies of mask stands found in ethnological museums around Europe, the elegantly curved *Trophy Stands* are devoid of the rituals and presence fundamental to interpreting them. The component shapes of the *Trophy Stands* are instead formed by imagination, presumption. The stands pierce the air, rendering the danger of colonial fantasies implicit in their forms. M'barek shares Boyce's interest in memory and objecthood, as well as here, in exoticism, yet she sculpts the violence that surrounds cultural artifacts in lieu of the artifacts themselves.

*Special thanks to the artists and Köser, Köln*