

Ringwald's Stamp on the Real (Art) World

The current show, the Real (Art) World, at the American University Museum in the Katzen Arts Center features five very different artists. This is an attempt to showcase what is really going on in the art world today. To make the show successful, artists were chosen based on the strength of their works to stand alone, while simultaneously complimenting the juxtaposed artists. If maintaining integrity, while displaying versatility and freshness was an important goal of the show then Marie Ringwald was by far a logical choice. Ringwald's work captures a mystic sense of the rural side of American architecture and effectively turns utilitarian buildings into an eloquent testament of poetic association to such a lifestyle.

Marie Ringwald's elegant utilization of the simple architectural language of buildings such as warehouses, factories, and all kinds of farm dependencies depicts the versatile character of these structures. The works are created out of wood, rubber, glass, and sheet metal – the same materials of the buildings that stand as her source of inspiration. Individually the works are constructed with great care and craft. Collectively the pieces stand as a testament to the impeccable working that is the end result of each completed piece.

Not only does this selection of recent work by Ringwald emphasize the depth of her artistic vision and dexterity; it also makes clear to the inspiration she drew from the minimalist movement of the seventies. While this style of art is often defined by its limited use of color, simple geometric design, and of its lack of allusion to any outside experience, like history, politics, or religion, Ringwald's works are an assimilation of thoughts. Though her work is permeated by these formal aspects of geometry and sparse, yet often bold color, she has allowed for her creations to also be vessels of emotional investment. The structural elements that serve as inspiration offer a source of hopefulness, possibilities, history, and mystery to the artist.

She attributes this end result, of works infused with significance and meaning, to letting herself be moved by the "real world." She has drawn from outside experiences, allowing acts of voyeurism to manifest as tangible works. When the conditions were natured, the works stand as an infusion of vision and reality.

Just as reality pervades into our existence, it diffuses into Ringwald's works. To see the encapsulation of reality and its effect on the human psyche at the height of its maturity is a wonder. The pinnacle of grow can be seen in the *Red* series. Here the architectural integrity of the building that stands as inspiration is translated to the nearly abstracted. For the exhibition at the Katzen Arts Center in the American University Museum these four pieces are displayed in a grid, highlighting the defining geometric principles of these square works.

Marie Ringwald's works are a reflection of the desire to merge provincial influence with an artist interpretation. The forms are simple, but there is a sense of distilled nostalgia making these pieces very sentimental. Rural by nature, these works offer a temporal escape from the hum of city living, particularly for Ringwald, a Washington, DC-based artist.

- Nicole Ferdinando
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