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Review, "Christopher Michlig at Marine."
Notes On Looking:
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Christopher Michlig at Marine Contemporary

by [Geoff Tuck](#) | Oct 23, 2012 | [Reviews](#) | [0 comments](#)



Christopher Michlig, *Fragments*
Foam, wood, paper, laminate
2012

First I think of the utilitarian basis of play – nothing useful should not also be fun. Then I think back to conversations with Chris Michlig about Russian Constructivism and Suprematism. I wonder whether part of what the Suprematists were doing was not so much repudiating the Constructivist’s utilitarian imperative as they were proposing Malevich’s *pure feeling* to be useful. After all, if only to bring humanity to life, feeling is necessary.

Michlig’s sculptures in his *White Noise* exhibition resemble low tables and stools on which are stacked and piled letter and number shapes which have volume (they are made from cut pieces of brightly-colored poster material). Past work by this artist also makes use of recognizably human-based objects for supports, as though by doing so – by using chairs, slender wooden frames that look like folding furniture, and now the tables and stools in *White Noise*, Michlig wants one to respond physically and psychologically as one might in the home or office.

The new sculptures are made of light wood, and some have molded plaster or concrete legs. I recall that the top surface of a few are plain and others are covered in white laminate. I distinctly recall liking heart-shaped supports in one sculpture, and this one, along with another that holds a colorful Ferris wheel, make me wonder how personal is this artist’s work? In the past Michlig’s sculptures challenged me to counterpoise in my mind utility, or anthropomorphy, with abstraction, and these new sculptures *feel* based in humor. It’s a nice place to start.

The (mostly) modestly-sized poster collages that he shows push farther into “pure” abstraction than in the past. Language has been excised, text is not an active element, and so letter-less strips cut from the edges of posters are braided, woven, laid side-by-side, and in several ways collaged into abstract patterns. Slivers of color remain, and these are like pen marks, spare repetitive lines that emphasize the handled-looking whiteness of Michlig’s abstractions.

The two bodies of work in the show seem developed together, but are as though heading in different directions: the text has fallen off Michlig’s familiar poster collages and now straddles surface and object in his floor-pieces – as though Mira Schendler had been making bright, cheerful sculptures; the poster collages are heading into geometry. Further new work that I find on the website for Devening Projects + Editions (where Michlig has a show through December 8) are celebrations of pattern, and they have the non-representation, the mathematical feel, and wealth of color found in Islamic mosaics. Glorious. Sweet.

Christopher Michlig, *White Noise* at Marine, September 8 through October 13

[Marine Contemporary](#)

Christopher Michlig, *Patternesque* at Devening Projects + Editions, October 14 through December 8

[Devening Projects + Editions](#)

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