

# updownacross

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## Cordy Ryman at DCKT Contemporary

By Joann Kim  
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I consider Cordy Ryman an artist's artist. He is the everyman artist in the likes of Bruce Nauman experimenting with the limits between material and body and incorporating the practice of an artist at his studio through the use and reuse of materials at hand. In a show that just closed at DCKT Contemporary, the artist welcomes us with hands wide open, gesturing us to enter and listen as he shares his process and creation one painterly sculpture, one sculptural painting at a time.

The show includes pieces in all shapes and sizes, installed vicariously throughout the gallery. The artist uses scraps left over from complete pieces and residue picked up from the floor incorporated into rods and bricks of wood which emphasizes the experimental and comfortably imperfect. The uninhibited approachability is what attracted me the most to these works, there is a comfortableness and openness to them that erases any barriers or pedestals or distinguished separations between work and viewer. Mostly abstract, minimal, repetitive and recycled, the works in the show are spontaneous, colorful, playfully haphazardous, and carefree. Paintings are given table top legs, long rods of wood undulate by merely leaning on a wall, wooden bricks are painted in neon shades and disorderly and cascading next to a brick wall, 1\_2s create a spine up and down a corner, hiding and blooming simultaneously, and grids of abstraction mingle with scraps of velcro and sanded woodchips. It reminds me of happy children frolicking in a playground in a game of hide and seek.

The painting hangs at a diagonal instigating a dialogue between sculpture and painting in its three dimensionality. The crud execution with dents, smudges and imperfections give it a quirky quality that is curiously charming. Holes are punched to depict the suction cups of tentacles as literal and direct as it may be, there is also incorporated elements of formalist abstraction, a flow of color and shape that is nothing more than a flow of color and shape.

Thin long pieces of wood blocks are haphazardly consecutively leaning against the wall creating an undulating wave. This is amazingly simple and unthought of. Each are sectioned into three parts and painted red in reverse. Again the idea of sculpture as painting, painting as sculpture rings in my mind as these unassuming and modest rods unite and move in silence.

Even the titles are matter of fact and unassuming. Everything about the works from the titles to the process to the materials and installation make them so simple and approachable. The disturbance created by the scraps of color are like scarmarks sharing with us memorable stories.

I'm curious to know if the white wall supporting the wood blocks were installed specifically for this piece to create a dichotomy of real red bricks with the playful mob of faux constructions. They are placed in situ and I'm also curious how they'd be installed in a different home/gallery/show.

Ryman's incorporates modernist abstraction with contemporary concerns/obsessions with found/everyday objects and there is almost a utilitarian message here using such a functional object like velcro to mark strips and create a patter jumbled and appropriated atop a color grid. It is imperfect and crude in rendering but that is precisely what give it character and individuality.

Situated precariously along a hard to see corner in the gallery is a long series of wood blocks, its short facing side painted 2 shades of orange and yellow. It peeks out and protrudes as if a defense mechanism, defensive yet harmless.

The multiplicity of shape and form, color and installation makes these works engaging and spastic. Their unassuming modesty and humbleness make them approachable and open to various interpretations. I was very much affected by these qualities, swooning to their kindness and confessional availability.