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Elodie Seguin



Elodie Seguin, *Installation*, 2017, wood, ink, polyurethane paint, plaster. Installation view. Photo: François Doury.

Despite being an outlier in many ways, *Peinture cherche le mur A* (Painting Looking for the Wall A) (all works 2017), a small painting of a simplified orange flashlight, fittingly illuminated Elodie Seguin's usually less straightforward explorations of form, color, and texture. The cylindrical orange and red shaft emitting a conical gray-white beam—the most overtly representational element in the artist's recent exhibition "*Peinture sculpture peinture*"—encouraged viewers to seek out figuration and symbolism in other works on view, which might otherwise be mistaken as exemplars of pure Minimalism.

Take, for instance, a series titled "*Résistance*." At first glance these carefully considered, meticulously crafted geometric studies look to be the love children of John McLaughlin's hard-edge rectangle paintings and Donald Judd's neat Plexiglas boxes. Here Seguin uses similar materials (wood, pale-blue Plexiglas, polyurethane paint) to examine a single form—an elongated rectangle with short, thin bars jutting from its right and left sides—across different permutations of color and material.

The foundation for each *Résistance* is a roughly fifteen-by-thirty-seven-inch wooden panel into which the artist hand-carved the recurrent rectangle-with-appendages that—as the series title might remind those who may not remember diagramming circuits in junior high school—is the symbol for electrical resistance. From there, Seguin subtly varies her paint colors as well as the shape and placement of the Plexiglas used in three of the four "*Résistance*" works to create a series that resists traditional painterly notions of foreground and background, subject and frame, as well as two-dimensionality. In some cases, the Plexiglas creates a flat, shiny surface that effectively frames the subject (*Résistance 4*), while in others the plastic sheet helps to define, or even becomes part of, the resistance symbol—either as an inlay (*Résistance 5*) or an overlay (*Résistance 3*). Resistance is also manifested in the way the artist challenges the objectivity of Minimalism. Saddled with symbolism, Seguin's deceptively simple geometric forms made (by hand) from industrial materials have practical and political implications.

Featuring similarly subtle variations of color and form, Seguin's site-specific *Installation* consists of seven handpainted, wall-mounted wooden panels of identical size and vertical orientation. Seguin covered the surfaces and edges of each human-scale panel with a single coat of printmaking ink—an unforgiving medium highly prone to stains, chips, and smudges—in various hues, including dark green and pale orange. To enable handling of these incredibly fragile works, she painted bright-orange and white glossy polyurethane "grips" on either side of the five darkest panels. These two slender rectangles are the only place where one could touch these works without destroying their pristine, velvety matte surfaces. The design and manufacture of this installation—whose components don't fit neatly into the categories of painting and sculpture invoked in the exhibition title—recall another artist whose work eschewed easy classification and who also used color as a structural material. Like John McCracken's painstakingly handmade "planks," Seguin's intrinsically fragile *Installation* belies its industrial Minimalist aesthetic and instead quietly fetishizes the artist's singular intimate role in the artwork's fabrication.

—Mara Hoberman

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