

Kayne Griffin Corcoran

artillery

Pick of the Week: Sculpture

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Installation View, "Sculpture", Kayne Griffin Corcoran

Sculpture is a medium of art with infinite possibilities. Unbounded by canvas or wall, a sculpture is only defined by the space itself. Yet despite the limitless potential definitions, there is only ever one realized in the moment that the iron is cast, the glass blown, or the stone hewn. This decisive moment is what allows for a narrative to form, one which in masterful hands reflects the society that surrounds it. "Sculptures," a group show currently running at Kayne Griffin Corcoran, illustrates this narrative by expertly linking works created over the last sixty years in beautiful conversation.

To begin this decades-long story, "Sculptures" presents the artists who dove head-first into the literal material of their works. Nowhere in the show is this more clear than with Tatsuo Kawaguchi's *Iron of Iron and/or Tools; Plier* (1975), where a pair of pliers are firmly embedded into an iron plate. Kawaguchi is highlighting the material from which tools are derived, and in doing so, questions the very conceptions of origin. In many ways, the artists collected in this show of his era – from the Arp-esque Ken Price to the minimalist Mary Corse – are all primarily concerned with the minor subversion of the expectations we place on material.

But there is a far greater subversion explored in "Sculptures," a task handled by the sculptors to come in the 21st century. With these artists, the questions brought about have far more to do with the actual conceptual definition of the objects they represent rather than the materials. Is a gate still a gate if it leads nowhere? Is a boat still a boat if you cover it in copper shingles? And when is a bench simply a bench (or a lamp simply a lamp), and not a piece of art?

These works engender a distrustfulness not uncommon in contemporary society, an unwillingness to take anything presented earnestly at face value. The later works are pessimistic counterparts to the sincere explorations of material with which they are paired. And it is vital to keep these two seemingly disparate ideas in mind at the same moment. We must be equally dedicated in our investigation of our origins as we are concerned with subverting the expectations set by them. To forget where we came from is to forget why we must be distrustful.

—Cole Sweetwood