

PRESSBOOK

Matthew RONAY

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Matthew Ronay at Galerie Perrotin, Paris

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Matthew Ronay's sculptures conjure both folk art and Surrealism, spiked with a vivid hit of psychedelia. His exhibition "Ramus," on view at Galerie Perrotin, Paris, on view through May 26, showcases handmade carved-and-sanded, flocked-and dyed basswood forms, all created in 2017, including the viscera like piece "Sexual Trimorphism" and the phantasmagorical "Move, Swallow, Breathe."

Under the carnivalesque burst of colors, Ronay's craftsmanship is still visible, highlighting the wood grain. The artist works off of his own initial drawings but, as curator Justin Beal clarifies, "these are not drawings of sculptures, they are drawings that become sculptures, which is to say they are neither plans nor diagrams, but some thing more free form, more intuitive."

The Kentucky-born artist, who received his MFA from Yale, works and resides in Brooklyn — though one might be forgiven for wondering if he secretly dwells in some kind of twisted knock off of Candy Land. But if there's a cartoonishness in his oeuvre, it evokes an unhinged sci-fi worm hole from the animated series "Rick and Morty" rather than a stock Disney Atlantis.

In fact, Ronay's combination of strange silhouettes and pigment bursts are all the more amusing because of the way they incite viewers — and critics — to conjure evocative references and cross-references in which these pieces might contextually exist. Artforum was confounded by the "sexualized forms ... objects that elude simple recipes for attraction or repulsion" at his 2017 show "Surds" at Marc Foxx gallery in Los Angeles. "Ronay's sculptures look as if they might be the offspring of a preschooler's building blocks and a rogue coral reef," wrote the Los Angeles Times of the same show. A different critic for the

same publication described the work in Ronay's previous exhibition, "Organ/Organelle," as "a kind of Seussian altarpiece." When his show at the Pérez Art Museum opened in 2016, The Miami Rail deemed his work "squirmy eros and comic brutality."

Yet as Ronay himself articulated in a conversational interview with The Believer: "What is offered is a chance to create something revealing out of something that is trying to lose its self-consciousness." Elaborating on how he brings together pieces for his installations, he said: "The question should never be 'Will they work together?' or 'Why can't they work with something else?' but 'How do I get to that specifically atmospheric place?' Any series of objects deciphers the most serpentine of interests."

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