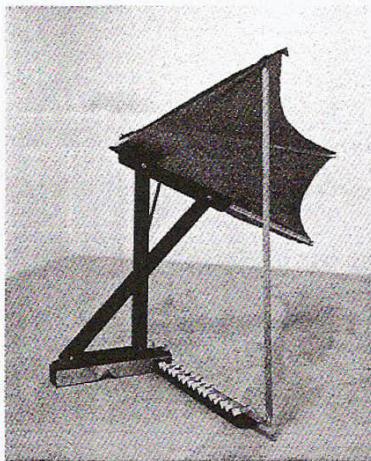


SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

ArtForum
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Jason Meadows, *Count Dracula*, 2002, wood, paint, fabric, mesh, aluminum, twist tie, 61½ x 42 x 23”.

JASON MEADOWS MARC FOXX

The announcement card to Jason Meadows's show, "Animal Eyes" provided a starting point for considering his recent work. If the show's title is read phonetically (to become *animalize*), Meadows could be seen to animalize his earlier DIY geometric formalism, in which part of the visual excitement pivoted on a "pop-up" effect. Pieces appeared to be flat when seen from one vantage and "popped up" when seen from another to become fully volumetric, an aspect most easily observed in his bicycle tire and aluminum scaffold pieces, where three and four tires lined up to be perceived as a "single" tire. In his latest sculptures, Meadows adds narrative (call it a "pop-up book" effect), folding the referent of the human animal into the sculptural forms.

The announcement's red lettering also underscored the role of color in Meadows's work, which everywhere radiated in radical oranges, turquoises, verdant greens, and pinks and often in harlequin (or Duchampian chessboard?) patterning. "Painting" operates in all of the sculptures; in *Squaw* (all works 2002), a piece of canvas even serves as a base for the thing, situating sculptural concerns with signs of painting. In fact, it might be fruitful to consider Meadows's sculptural response to painting as a reflection on Paul McCarthy's taking painting into the

realm of sculpture through performance.

Not that Meadows has totally abandoned his previous, more sober palette. A swath of black fabric mesh, resembling a bat wing in a taxidermy display, is carefully supported in *Count Dracula* by a slanted X of painted black wood and a jugged wood base with a movable dowel rod that angles the fabric. Since a single wing wouldn't get anything off the ground, the referent to "wing"—of a vampire bat or scavenger bird—flies away, leaving only a strange form. Certain versions of the *Dracula* story allow the Count to be a master of shape-shifting. But as much as transfiguration is pertinent to Meadows's project, the wing seems to refer to da Vinci and his plans for ways to make man fly, if only on the pegasean wings of inspiration, invention.

A horse of a different color chafes at the bit in *Win Place Show*. Kienholz and Rauschenberg course through its bloodlines. The piece suggests that jockey's silks provided one source of inspiration for the sculptor's harlequin patterns of paint. From one angle, the sculpture suggests a horse in the paddock—hedge, posts, ring to strap the lead—and from another, a weird extension of Meadows's materials and previous geometries in architectural corners, planarity, and color. Visual tension is achieved by the careful balance of representation and nonrepresentation, by formal decisions being put into a race with seemingly casual, slapdash details, like tattered plastic. A wedge of wood painted black topped by a snappily jigsawed piece of white plywood refers to the equine as speedily as to, say, the sinuous curve of

a Chippendale settee. In the race, when and how does nonrepresentation rein in worldly reference? A stack of painted picnic benches, *Board Slide*, idles near *Win Place Show*; in becoming sculpture, they haven't abandoned their picnic bench-ness, although clearly they're no longer simply that. Where *Win Place Show* becomes an allegory of competition (of collectors', gallerists', curators' bets placed on young artists), with *Board Slide* Meadows offers a slower, less showy abstraction of thingness in itself, balancing precariously. Slowing things down may, paradoxically, take his investigation even further, the last jewel in the Triple Crown.

—Bruce Hainley

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