

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Modern Painters
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Erin Shirreff
FRONT TOP
Drop (No. 1),
2013. Raw hot-
rolled steel.
109 x 57 x 20 in.

Installation view
of "Day Is Long,"
2013.

NEW YORK

Erin Shirreff

Lisa Cooley // May 5–June 23

THERE'S SOMETHING ALMOST admirably naive about Shirreff's aesthetic observations. After all, who hasn't noticed that a marble countertop looks a lot like the face of Jupiter? But Shirreff's agility with materials, combined with a brilliant manipulation of scale, makes her work contemporary yet also deeply resonant.

The first pieces viewers encounter upon entering the gallery are simple enough: framed, achromatic prints of what appear to be tightly cropped portraits of planetary bodies, lit from a number of directions. The sobering reality is that these images are of the interiors of the used work buckets in Shirreff's studio, offering an apt introduction to her routine-meets-reliquary process. The quotidian production behind these photographs of plaster and graphite-pigment residue has also given us *Catalogue*, 2013, a long graphite-pigmented plaster slab displaying a series of curved objects of the same material, which juts out from the wall atop a metal shelf. The studied geometric samples, which have the appearance of worked rock or metal, combine the banality of kitchen-counter samples with the mystery of an archaeological presentation.

A revelatory projection piece entitled *Medardo Rosso, Madame X, 1896*, 2013, is a funny and haunting reimagining of the Rosso-head sculpture in the title. *Madame X* is another piece that echoes the primordial via the artist's daily experience, this time by referring to the history of pareidolia that our species exhibits in relation to ancient bodies, such as the famous Face on Mars. In the looped video, Shirreff brings together reproductions of this already abstracted sculpture—from a variety of angles and under different types of lighting—in order to further obscure the already abstract *Madame X*, a process in which Shirreff knowingly replicates the human tendency to discover our own face within a mysterious inanimate object. It's an inventive construct by an artist who proves in this exhibition that she isn't short on visual tricks. —Ryan E. Steadman

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