


In Brief

Market

Art World

People

Search


 US Tourists Steal  
Pompeii Artifact

 John Malkovich  
Impersonates  
Celebrities for...

 Artists and ACLU Fight  
Arizona's...

 1,500  
Mona  
in Isra

## Roxy Paine at Marianne Boesky: The Raw Spectacle of Wood

Ben Davis, Wednesday, September 17, 2014

SHARE

### Newsletter Signup

ENTER YOUR EMAIL

SEND



Roxy Paine, *Checkpoint* (2014)  
Photo courtesy of Marianne Boesky

**SHOWSTOPPER:** You'd have to have a heart of the hardest, most impossible-to-carve stone not to think the sculptures in Roxy Paine's new show "Denuded Lens," are at least cool. The centerpiece of the Brooklyn-based sculptor's gallery exhibition, an installation called *Checkpoint* (2014), is a marvel, a fantastically detailed rendering of an airport checkpoint, everything from the garbage cans to the scanner machine carved in fluent detail out of maple wood, so pale and perfect that it seems apparitional. What's more, the whole tableau is actually just about 15 feet deep, but from the correct angle it comes together into a plunging space that appears much, much deeper. Upon inspection, you realize that this effect is achieved through distortion:

### Latest Headlines



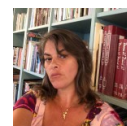
Artist Behind Viral  
John Malkovich  
Photos Wanted to  
Critique...



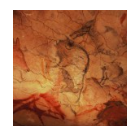
Russian Church  
Leader Deems  
Contemporary Art  
"Filth and Stupidity"



Frieze Founders Hand  
Over Reins to New  
Director



Tracey Emin and  
Damien Hirst Share  
"Shelfies"



Spain Will Keep  
"Sistine Chapel of  
Palaeolithic Art"  
Open...

The wooden objects inside *Checkpoint* are actually squashed and flattened wooden facsimiles, and those objects at the far end of the space are rendered much smaller than they appear—feats achieved through computer modelling. Making this most hated of contemporary locales into an object of wonder is on the order of making Google Glass look cool, but Paine does it.

**VAGUE IDEAS:** But are these hyper-detailed sculptures, for lack of a better term, a little wooden? *Checkpoint* is amusing and expertly pulled off—if Paine’s sculptural concoctions look like magic from afar, up close you see how he uses the intricacies of the wood grain to expert effect—but there’s not a ton to say about it besides just that. Another work, *Intrusion* (2014), is a life-size pinball machine, its insides filled with a craggy granite landscape (rendered in wood) rather than bumpers, flippers, and the familiar kit. This is meant to say something about the clash of two types of time, geologic “deep time” and ... the time it takes to get multiball? *Intrusion* has the character of a random 3 a.m. Deep Thought rendered in lavish sculptural form, its hyperreal detail not matched by a detailed idea.

**SECRET MESSAGE:** Yet, that exact sense of vagueness may be the starting point for something else, an important point that can be whittled out of it all. Another sculpture, *Scrutiny* (2014), features an examination table and a swarm of optical devices, all frozen in wood—cameras, microscopes, lights—and all trained on an empty space at the table’s center. *Machine of Indeterminacy* (2014) is a boxy contraption whose lovingly carved tubes, levers, and screens don’t seem to match up or fit together to any real purpose. There’s something here that amounts to a theme about sophisticated technological processes with nothing to justify them. It’s a message that seems both half-accidental and half-intended, but the sculptures in “Denuded Lens” ultimately do seem to be in some way *about* how the contemporary ability to make cool things has progressed much faster than the ability to know what exactly to do or say with it.

Roxy Paine, “*Denuded Lens*” is on view at [Marianne Boesky Gallery](#) through October 18, 2014.

---

SHARE

---

## Related Articles



od Title  
You  
ase



New York Gallery  
Beat: 6 Critics  
Review 16 Shows



Fil  
Some  
NADA

---

## NEXT ART WORLD ARTICLE

Los Angeles Galleries and

## Featured on artnet

### ARTISTS



Allen Ruppersberg

Conceptual Art

---

### PARTNERSHIPS



Modern Art & Design Auction

Los Angeles Modern Auctions  
Sunday, October 12, 2014

---

### EVENTS



John Baldessari: The News

at Gemini G.E.L.

9/25/2014

## Roxy Paine at Marianne Boesky: The Raw Spectacle of Wood

Museum at Odds Over  
Bergamot Station Revamp

[Contact Us](#)   [Advertise](#)   [Press Releases](#)   [Terms](#)   [Privacy](#)   [About](#)  
[artnet Magazine Archive: English \(US\)](#)   [Deutsch](#)   [Français](#)

©2014 Artnet Worldwide Corporation