

“economy of means: toward humility in contemporary sculpture”

SCOTTSDALE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

7374 East Second Street

January 21–April 29

For this show, curator Cassandra Coblenz has organized thirty-two sculptures by nineteen artists around five interrelated concepts: seriality (sic), circulation, chance, balance, and narrative implications. The works range from Minimalist groupings of found objects such as Martin Soto Climent's *Delivery*, 2006–, a miniature housing estate where high-rises are represented by upside-down paper bags, to Beth Campbell's *Lamps*, 2010, an elaborate production comprising four identical table lamps in various stages of liquefaction. Practically all these objects highlight the discrepancy between the anticipated and the actual behavior of their materials—emphasizing their physical limitations—and require viewers to suspend their disbelief. For example, Ara Dymond's perilous *Rug*, 2011, which consists of a sequence of glass strips wedged sharp end up into a Ranger board, challenges the viewer to bridge the ontological gap between the signifier and the signified.



Martin Soto Climent, *Delivery*, 2006–, paper bags and ink stamp, dimensions variable.

Felipe Cohen's *Tape*, 2009, a sculpture composed of satin tape and basalt, appears to be simply a ribbon arranged to show two kinks along its yard-and-a-half smooth span. In reality, the hard stone, which shapes the kinks, challenges the sense of the ribbon as malleable, asserting the sculpture's underlying rigidity. Likewise, Cohen's *Untitled, from the midday*, 2010, a cardboard box, takes on near-architectural airs through its black basalt base. Here, the implied fragility of cardboard disappears as the box's shadow turns out to be rendered in basalt, making the work literally rock-solid.

Combining optical veracity and visual trickery with improbable objects suggests a new “economy of means”; by deluding material expectations, these works lead the viewers to reconceptualize them, offering endless interpretive strategies to those willing to engage.

— Julia Friedman