

EXHIBITION REVIEWS

mobile-like, kinetic works for the first time, and was ethereally transfixed by the poetry of these forms in motion.

In addition to "the art of time," one might also describe works, like the majestic *Pentacentricos Laton* (2012), which consists of linear concentric brass pentagons descending from the ceiling, as being "forms in motion"—namely because the forms do not exist except in motion. This, of course, recalls an earlier theoretical premise put forth by the Hungarian Bauhaus artist Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946) who constructed his *Light Space Modulator* that initially began in Weimar in 1922 and was later completed in Dessau in 1930.

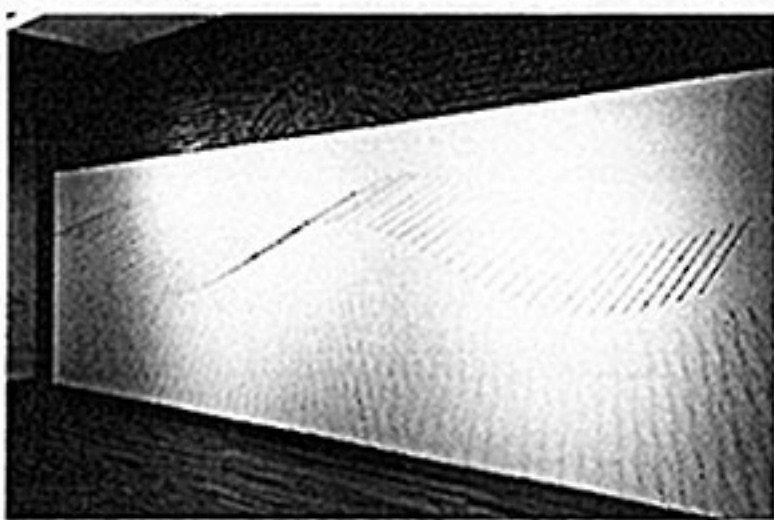
In fact, Elias Crespin's work represents a genuine advance in the development of our visual intelligence that may parallel our concept of being in the world, which is also perpetually in motion. In this sense, the title of his exhibition, *Parallels*, is appropriate even as it may tend to understate the originality, dignity, and pleasure embodied in these marvelous kinetic forms. In some ways, they reassure us that the quality of life, which (some would argue) vacillates on the brink of disappearance, is still present when we choose to see art from such an eloquent and understated point of view.

Robert C. Morgan

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William Stone at 7Eleven Gallery

I have followed the work of William Stone—an artist included in a recent exhibition, titled *Alchemy*, at the 7Eleven Gallery in New York—for more than three decades. What has always impressed me about Stone's work is the artist's keen ability to bring a concept into prominence through material processes. His approach to making art defies both the systemic variations of Sol LeWitt and linguistic strategies of Joseph Kosuth. In contrast, Stone offers a conceptual approach to art directly involved



Elias Crespin, *Piano Flexionante 3*, 2012, kinetic sculpture, dimensions variable. Installation view at Cecilia de Torres, New York, 2012.

with material that at the same time avoids academic formulas. He knows how to shed light on an idea through these processes, ultimately trusting the force of the concept to make its transmission.

In the press release for *Alchemy*, the following statement incited my deep interest in a recent work by the artist: "William Stone presents two identical sculptures, one wood the other a bronze copy. The original wood piece was created by a beaver and found on a beaver dam in Vermont. The beaver is the artist and Stone sees himself as his assistant, bringing the piece to the foundry. The foundry is the alchemist, transforming

artist-made detritus into gold colored metal."

What could be more perfect? Nature proceeds to do its job and the artist follows suit. Instead of the artist making the work or discovering the work in the sense of *l'objet trouvé*, the anonymous beaver articulates the work with its teeth, gnawing away the wood until he achieves a perfect form—an "assisted ready-made" in the classical Duchampian sense. Just as the artist Duchamp discovered the bottle drying rack one fine day while strolling along the *quai* in Paris, why not suggest that the artist William Stone could repeat this action in the relative wilderness? Instead of Paris, Stone strolls through the



William Stone, *Double Beaver*, 2011, wood and bronze.

landscape of the Catskills—and then Eureka!—he sees the work of a beaver and immediately recognizes its potential artfulness. The gnawed wood appears as a human form, an accidental male counterpart to the Venus of Willendorf only carved by the beaver's teeth in wood instead of chipped away at stone. Yet the artist's discovery was not made in a Paleolithic cave, but found as a remnant of a natural (animal) process performed in the relative present.

Stone has always confessed an interest in alchemy. Thus, the exhibition context at New York's 7Eleven Gallery was an ideal venue, a precise context in which to exercise his atavistic discovery. He would perform as the beaver's assistant and take his ready-made to the foundry where it would be cast in bronze with a patina, thus matching the natural splendor of the gnawed wood. The cast would be exact. It would not so much function as a simulation but a replication of the beaver's toothy work. In addition, the bronze would exist in an identical scale to that of the beaver's work. Stone then decided that the foundry would become the agent of his alchemy—the place where the controlled heat of the fire would result in a bronze replica, finally to be shown side-by-side with the beaver's work. In this sense, alchemy had performed its mysterious, albeit, logical function.

The conceptual connection between what Stone delivered to the foundry and what the beaver gnawed—either incidentally or intentionally—was complete. Furthermore, the difference between the incidental and the intentional in nature would now exist on a different level in the material world. Through the interaction of artist and beaver, an atavistic intelligence ensued, suggesting that art may require the assistance of nature to make its final claim—a point earlier inspired by the Dadaist Jean Arp at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich 86 years ago near the outset of the 20th century.

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