

Gordon Powell

Perimeter

Chicago

Chicago artist Gordon Powell's abstractions possess a sort of disheveled elegance. The 14 works in this enchanting show, titled "Constructions," maintain a tension between the haphazard and the refined—the wall-mounted painted-wood works convey the casual air of found objects, even as every nick, line, smudge, and cut in their surfaces feels deliberate and meaningful.

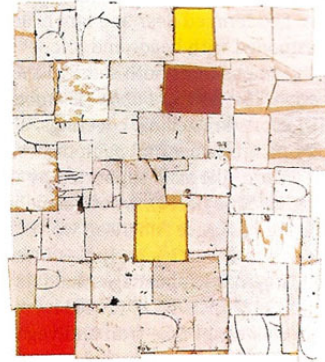
Powell's love of buildings and building things is evident. For some time he has referenced architecture through his choice of materials—medium-density fiberboard and lumber. In these works, chunks of imperfect rectangles are arranged like puzzle pieces into larger fields mixing white-washed finishes and bare wood. Occasionally small yellow, red, or salmon panels show up in the field. All of the works are more delicate than they first appear. Powell uses dyed adhesive both to assemble the panels and as a sort of line that works with surface cuts on some panels to create the "drawing."



0".

Intrusion (2006), the only titled piece in the show, is composed of fiberboard rectangles of varying sizes that fit together tidily and that have been set flush within a smooth white wood frame. The panels have been peeled of their

smooth surface to reveal something like directional grain, arranged horizontally or vertically in a way that suggests the weft



Gordon Powell, *Untitled*, 2010, wood, medium-density fiberboard, dyed glue, paint, and pencil, 58" x 52½".
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and warp of woven fabric. Very thin strips of wood, the same color as the frame, jut into the main field like markers.

In *Untitled* (2010), one of the larger works at nearly five feet square, small yellow, red, and maroon panels are dropped into the composition among dozens of white-washed pieces. Powell has cut arcs into several of the panels. It's an arresting piece, implying, as many of the works here do, an aerial view of a carved up and apportioned landscape.

Elsewhere, swooping lines hint at the shape of a human torso. Whatever the intended allusions, the subtle lines and expansive fields breathe life into these engaging abstractions. —*Ruth Lopez*