

Jonathan Goodman, "Reviews," Sculpture, January/February 2011

workings of perception—its ability to persuade us that observations are real when they may, in fact, be anything but genuine. James's constructions are smart investigations into the nature of human ingenuity and the interplay between new and traditional ideas about art. A true sculptor, she practices an art that is deeply postmodern in its whimsicality and ad-hoc exploration of visual depth (although we remember that perspective has been, after all, a major concern for Western artists for some 500 years). Even so, her work is hardly anachronistic or oriented toward the past. She has the sensi-

bility of a recycler, using such simple materials as found windows and their casements and diminutive cuckoos taken from clocks.

Two video viewers, constructed rather like square megaphones, stood in the front room of the gallery, each showing a different sequence of images. *Six* (2010) lasts 90 seconds; and *Window* (2010) lasts an hour and a half. In *Six*, we watch a number six train making its way through an abandoned subway station; simple in-camera techniques recast the spatial and temporal coordinates of the experience. In *Window* (2010), we see a landscape shot from James's family home in Connecticut; the camera is reflected

on the window through which we view evergreens and uninhabited nature. As constructions combining actual and artificially derived imagery, the videos show us a visual kaleidoscope that emphasizes the processing of what we see. In another group of works, wooden cuckoos open their mouths as if in song; the silent music results from a moving metronome strung to their beaks. Striking in their simplicity, these constructions are interesting for their introduction of movement into sculpture.

Consistently focused on how materials contribute to perception, James makes art that challenges our thinking. One of the most engaging pieces in the show was the construction made of salvaged windows and wood. *See-Through's* complicated, rotating structure occupied a space defined by two specially constructed, conjoined walls with two windows. The windows allowed viewers to see through to the space that housed the work's elements, giving a real sense of being inside and outside and the working relation between the two. Like much of James's work, *See-Through* offered a droll take on how we perceive three-dimensional space, its insights changing dramatically from the window of one wall to the next. Eschewing gimmicks for imagistic integrity, James makes sure that her projects exercise the viewer's intelligence, no matter how seemingly simple her concept or materials.

—Jonathan Goodman

NEW YORK

Meredith James

Marc Jancou Contemporary

Not yet 30, with a 2009 MFA from Yale, Meredith James might be characterized as someone whose time has come a bit too soon. But the truth is otherwise: her work is brilliantly effective and wonderfully new, emphasizing the unpredictable



TOP: LAURA VORPIS, COURTESY [CTS] CREATIVE THIRTIETH; NY / BOTTOM: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND MARC JANCOU CONTEMPORARY, NY