



Art review: Andrew Lewicki at Charlie James

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The sculptures in Andrew Lewicki's first solo show, at Charlie James, shimmer as brightly and briefly as fireworks -- and leave just as little residue. Each involves some sort of transposition or transformation -- the familiar re-crafted in an unfamiliar material, the precious recast as mundane or vice versa. A waffle iron bears raised, Teflon-coated Louis Vuitton monograms instead of the usual generic grid of square nubs. What looks like a stack of gold bars is actually melted and reformed gold crayons. A cast-iron manhole cover looks exactly like a giant Oreo.

The work comes across as smart and calculated, but too much so -- overly schooled, almost smug. The sculptures are all one-liners, but as Lewicki writes in an airtight accompanying statement, they're meant to be so, intended to parody the rhetorical device even if they merely exploit it.

The stunted strategy brings to mind any number of artists from a generation ago who aspired to critique the commodification of art by creating yet more art-like commodities, framed by invisible air-quotes. Lewicki's work also recalls, naturally, Warhol and Duchamp, but doesn't pick up where they left off, re-envisioning relationships between found and fabricated, art and product, desire and fulfillment.

Lewicki has technical skills, intellectual means and a savvy sense of humor (his plywood and plastic electric guitar is dubbed "Less Paul"), and he does begin to elicit some interesting friction between childhood playthings and adult gratification. But only one piece in the show dangles in the mind like an unanswered question: the pure white "Petit Déjeuner," an uneasy fusion of juicer and ashtray, at once repulsive and elegant.

-- Leah Ollman

Charlie James Gallery, 969 Chung King Road, L.A., (213) 687-0844, through April 14. Closed Sundays through Tuesdays.
www.cjamesgallery.com

Image: Andrew Lewicki's "Louis Vuitton Waffle Maker" (2012), edition of three, Teflon-coated aluminum, enamel on aluminum sheet, generic waffle maker parts, 14 x 11.5 x 13.5 inches. Credit: Charlie James Gallery