



Felix Schramm's site-specific installation *Comber* at Grimm/Rosenfeld in New York last winter.

At the New Art Dealers Alliance fair in Miami last December, visitors might have mistaken Felix Schramm's artwork for debris from the season's hurricanes, thrown up against the exterior of the Ice Palace Film Studios. Only a sliver of plaster and wood projecting through the building's exterior wall into Grimm/Rosenfeld's booth inside served as the crucial clue otherwise. It was "like the tip of the iceberg," explains the 35-year-old German. "I wanted people to see that and go around the wall and discover the sculpture."

Many artists have attacked the white cube, but few do so as viscerally as Schramm. He creates room-filling installations by breaking down the basic elements of the classic modernist gallery—Sheetrock and wooden studs. The effect is convincing: when Schramm had his first gallery show at Galerie Andreas Grimm in Munich in 2002, the postman assumed the space was undergoing renovation and stopped delivering mail.

A graduate of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, the affable Schramm describes his practice as a process of transforming architecture until it can no longer be categorized. Though the structures look like the work of vandals, on closer examination they reveal themselves to be delicately balanced. "The large pieces in particular are violent and forceful, heavy and insistent, the way a Richard Serra can be," notes Tara McDowell, curatorial associate at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. "But there is also something very classic about it—a carefully considered, elegant formalism."

Creating that mix of force and finesse takes a certain precision. "I had visions of chain saws and axes and was worrying about huge pieces falling on one of our technicians," recalls Adrian Rosenfeld, cofounder of Grimm/Rosenfeld, which has locations in Munich and New York. "But actually, he spent a lot of time doing mathematical calculations to make sure the form balanced." Schramm's November show at the New York gallery generated strong interest in his room-size works, which are tailored to the chosen space at a cost of \$25,000, plus any extra engineering charges. He spent the first part of this year creating one for the new exhibition space in the Manhattan home of collectors Susan and Michael Hort. Next month, he will produce a massive installation at Berlin's Hamburger Bahnhof.

For all the calculation that goes into his works, Schramm does experiment as he installs, often using elements salvaged from past shows. "For me, one of the biggest challenges in sculpture is to make the piece feel heavy, and yet at the same time, as delicate as something 20 times lighter," he says, "so that from some angles it seems light and simple, and from others it rips through the viewer."

—Marc Spiegler



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