

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

CHRISTOPHER CHIAPPA
COMPOSITIONS
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PRESS RELEASE

Christopher Chiappa's new solo exhibition, *Compositions*, engages the anxieties brought on by the persistent demand that creative labor be at once innovative and near constant. Twenty-five painted wooden sculptures make up a single installation within the gallery, each using the domestic table as a reference that is increasingly distorted, reformed, and abstracted.

With this show, his fourth at the gallery, Chiappa attempts a reset from past projects by returning to the most fundamental elements of abstraction: geometric shapes, solid colors, and line. His *Compositions* are made slowly, by hand; and his use of bright color serves to emphasize the assembly. The junctures between individual planes of wood are heightened by the sharp transitions in opposing colors and forms.

These works operate firmly within the gap of the simile. In color, shape, and temperament, they metabolize a succession of art historical reference points: Suprematism, Constructivism, Bauhaus, and Memphis Group. Like the Suprematists, for example, Chiappa uses the language of non-objective abstraction. However, instead of seeking to transcend the material world, he purposefully goes the wrong way around; he directs these forms back to the familiar.

Chiappa's *Compositions* evolve without foreseen conclusion, evidence that repetition leads not to sameness but to difference. Those bearing lower numbers are the early works closest to the basic form; those with higher numbers deviate further from the original. Though the parameters and materials remain the same, the final sculptures feel far removed from the first. The result is an autonomous object whose symbolic reference point has broken down altogether.

Christopher Chiappa's work marries the rigorously formal and darkly existential. Spanning performance, conceptual photography, sculpture, and installation, he often makes use of familiar domestic objects in such a way as to expose latent psychological associations, rendering the commonplace strange. The results are almost always a kind of investigation of the self, the autobiographical rendered through objects.

Christopher Chiappa (USA, b. 1970 in West Chester, PA) received his undergraduate degree from Middlebury College (Middlebury, VT). He has held solo exhibitions at the SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2018); MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2014-2015); Kate Werble Gallery, New York, NY (2015-2016, 2012, 2010); Fredericks & Freiser, New York, NY (2000, 2003) and Jessica Fredericks, New York, NY (1998). His work has been exhibited at venues including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; Museums of Bat Yam, Bat Yam, IL; Western Bridge, Seattle, WA; Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA; and Exit Art, New York, NY. He lives and works in Long Island City, NY.