

The New York Times

ART & DESIGN | LAST CHANCE

Review: In ‘The Architectural Impulse,’ Art Aspires

By **HOLLAND COTTER** AUG. 13, 2015



Center, Jennifer Marman and Daniel Borins’s sculpture “Floor 1-25” (2000); left, Francisco Ugarte’s “Self-Portrait (Drawing)” (2012); and right, Barbara Kasten’s digital video “Shadow=Light” (2010), at the Cristin Tierney Gallery. Credit John Muggenborg

‘THE ARCHITECTURAL IMPULSE’

Cristin Tierney Gallery

540 West 28th Street, Chelsea

Closes on Friday

In his 1896 essay, “The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered,” the Chicago architect Louis H. Sullivan said that he wasn’t going to write about the social morality surrounding architecture. Big, expensive structures were going to go up, no matter what; everything about American culture was geared to that. Instead, he wanted to talk

about a different morality, the morality of aesthetics, looks, ornament, and how buildings can aspire to being art objects.

Sullivan's subject, still very much with us, is posed — though flipped around — in this group show at Cristin Tierney, organized by the architect Warren James. Here, we're seeing art objects made in an architectural spirit. Some pieces do architecture's job of defining or altering space: Jennifer Marman and Daniel Borins's sculpture in the form of raised and stepped flooring does this; so does an abstract video projected on gallery walls by Barbara Kasten. Jean Shin creates fantasy structures from throwaway materials: In this case, she has built a miniature ziggurat from hundreds of Rolodex cards. Alois Kronschlaeger does something similar on a larger scale using colored ink-stained wood strips. (Alan Shields's wonderful tie-dyed enclosures come to mind.)

Most spectacularly, Filip Dujardin invents perspective-baffling, logic-defying interiors by manipulating digital images. Mr. Dujardin calls his tall buildings "Fictions," which they are likely to remain. But they stir sensations of architectural pleasure, which is a pleasure like no other, and sky-reaching isn't always necessary to inspire it. I felt a thrill seeing a small 2012 acrylic painting by Carmen Herrera composed of nothing more than a horizontal block of forest green set against a marigold-orange ground. Ms. Herrera may have intended the picture as an example of geometric abstraction; Mr. James clearly sees its architectural potential. Either way, the colors are a joy and low is a good height.

A version of this review appears in print on August 14, 2015, on page C24 of the New York edition with the headline: Review: In 'The Architectural Impulse,' Art Aspires. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)