



DeLucia fancifully transfigures the mundane.

By Nana Asfour

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Michael DeLucia, a graduate of London's Royal College of Art, is best known for his quirky transformations of hardware into uncanny abstract sculptures. For his first one-person New York show, however, the artist has gone mostly flat—surfacewise, at least. His current direction finds him presenting plywood sheets in arrays of grooved and monochromatic wall reliefs. Hung edge to edge, they are impressive both in their technique and in their optical effect.

On two adjacent walls, seven of these slabs form a sort of study of geometric forms—cones, beams, prisms and coils—in white, red, cobalt blue and black. The shapes, which start as drawings on a computer, are engraved into the panels with the help of a professionally operated router. Because the material is brittle, flecked chips in the wood and other happy accidents are left behind, subverting the sleekness of the design and fabrication process, and adding a sense of physicality to the work. These irregularities are further accentuated in another grouping, one that simultaneously evokes natural phenomena, Warhol's shadow paintings and Color Fields.

In a sense, DeLucia's new works are in line with his previous manipulations of three-dimensional objects, represented in this exhibit by two floor pieces. One of these is composed of numerous wooden mops, stuck headfirst into a blob of dried plaster in a corner of the gallery. Although certainly welcome, the presence of this ludicrous, marble-esque monument to a humble household item has the slightly undermining effect of creating a tinge of nostalgia for the artist's more playful beginnings.