

Rebar Reframed

Matt Johnson exhibits construction equipment as sculpture at Blum & Poe

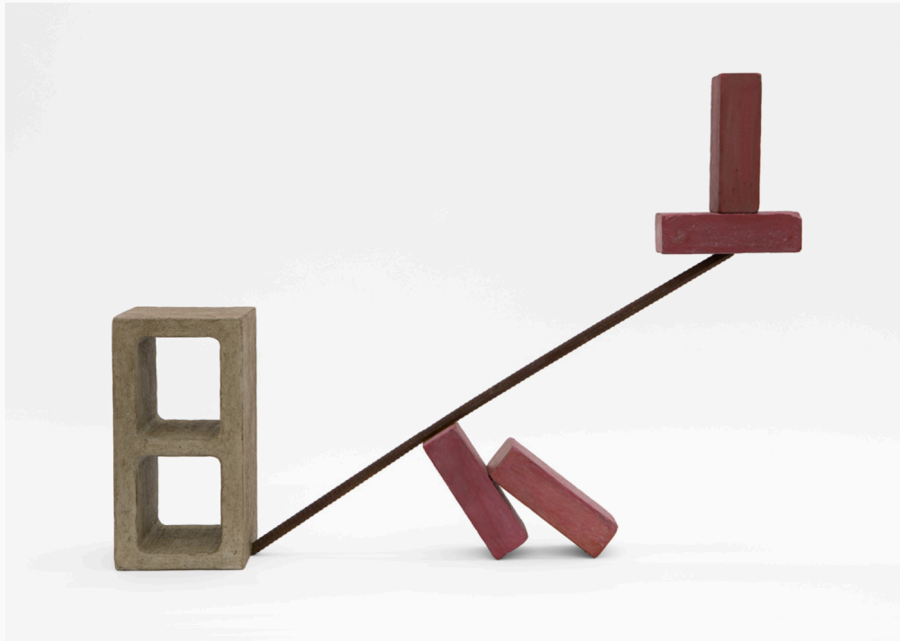
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Matt Johnson's fourth solo exhibition at Blum & Poe features eleven sculptures that marry construction materials with playful artistry. (Courtesy of Blum & Poe)

Much of the work produced by Los Angeles-based sculptor Matt Johnson attempts to speak to both the fields of art and architecture by marrying the material language of the latter with the playfulness of the former. An untitled exhibition of his work currently on display at L.A. gallery Blum & Poe demonstrates the artist's ability to take seemingly banal elements familiar to the construction industry—traffic cones, cinder blocks, bricks, rebar—and reconfigure them into works that question balance, efficiency, bureaucracy, and the general feeling of safety we ascribe to the built environment.

Johnson's fourth solo exhibition at Blum & Poe features eleven sculptures, each of which present fragile, precarious figures out of the most durable materials available in the building industry. This combination of materiality and precarity presented by Johnson recalls the work of modern and contemporary sculptors, including the spindly figures of Alberto Giacometti, the metal balancing acts of Alexander Calder, and the multimedia assemblages of Peter Fischli and David Weiss. Like those artists, Johnson employs few tricks to summon his materials into their seemingly impossible positions. "No illusions are cast," the press release states, "the objects are carved actors on a set, executing their performances, restricted only by their painted, wooden, physical existence."



One of the sculptures on display at Blum & Poe, titled '1 block with 2 bricks and 2 bricks cantilevered on 1 bar,'

A few of the sculptures on display even manage to bring a sense of personality and narrative to the inert objects that make up their compositions. One sculpture, titled *1 block with 2 bricks and 2 bricks cantilevered on 1 bar*, can be read as the embodiment of a millennia-long competition between clay and concrete in the building industry—or, speaking more generally, between two distinctly opposing methods of potentially arriving at the same final result. This and other pieces are, according to the gallery, “organized information, like subatomic particles, atoms and elements, molecules and compounds, glued by gravity, and magnetic polarity, surfing in a sea of electrical conductivity.”

The exhibition will be on display until January 11, 2020.