

GAGOSIAN GALLERY



Culture Monster

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME

Art review: Piero Golia at Gagosian Gallery

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At first, Piero Golia's "Constellation Paintings" feel exceedingly cynical. Large, shiny expanses of oily black resin are artlessly studded with shards of glass and ceramic, bits of furniture, and most tellingly, the lollipop-like hooks from an Eames coat rack. Like tombstones for a post-Modern apocalypse, the paintings spin these leftover fragments of idealistic, mid-20th century design into expensive art objects, hanging in the cleanest, whitest, most modern space imaginable at Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills. Even when it's trash, art like pop, will eat itself.

However, this particular debris turns out to be the result of a personal apocalypse. Last year, a cab crashed into Golia's home, destroying his collection of art and furniture. In this light, the paintings are perhaps an attempt to make some sense of chaos, just as we use constellations to organize the vast expanse of the sky.

Much less ambiguous, but far more delightful, are the artist's "Concrete Cakes," which are exactly as they sound: modest, white concrete forms cast from 12 different Bundt cake molds. Repositioning these domestic icons as Minimalist sculpture reveals their striking formal qualities.



Whether pleasingly smooth or dramatically fluted, the “cakes” exhibit a mathematical precision that evokes architecture more than cookery. Of course, architectural food is nothing new in the realm of high gastronomy, but Golia’s charming material substitution reveals some of the tangled roots of Modernist design in an easy Hostess cake.

--Sharon Mizota

Gagosian Gallery, 456 N. Camden Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 271-9400, through Aug. 5. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.gagosian.com

Photos: Top, Golia's "Constellation Painting No. 2." Lower, the installation of "Cakes and Constellations" at Gagosian Gallery. Credit: Top, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery. Lower, Douglas M. Parker Studio/Gagosian Gallery