

# ARTslant **New York**

July 9, 2014



## **Ryan Lauderdale / Jessica Sanders at KANSAS, through August 2**

In their two-person exhibition, Ryan Lauderdale and Jessica Sanders present work that takes various approaches to creating physical objects through systematic processes. What's remarkable is how their works seem to dialogue through the diversity of the basic forms and materials each artist prefers. Lauderdale presents hard-edged, technological lamp-like wall sculptures while Sanders is showing two focused groups of paintings that use the properties of beeswax over linen. Their works are displayed side by side in each of the cavernous rooms at Kansas and their remarkable coherence is a testament to the savvy eye of the gallerist that paired them.

*Black Lamp* (2014) is Lauderdale's most arresting work. In this piece the slick black curve of an open cylindrical wheel merges with the vertical base that houses a pair of tubular fluorescent bulbs. Every side of the well-crafted structure is finished in black, glossy Formica. High-contrast reflections of white light streak the surface and highlight nuances in the sculpture's form. With a portico-shaped hood and hidden sockets, the fluorescent tubes are pinned upright into a recessed base pedestal with trapezoidal sides. It's as decadent and appealing as the specialized shapes of a customized car.

The three-piece installation that occupies the back room, *Interior with Cornice* (2014), is like an opulent mise-en-scène. Here, freestanding triangular structures mirror each other across an attached glass platform. The pieces are furniture-scaled, but their skeletal structure does not invite participation with the body in any way. There's a sense of theatricality to the luxurious-looking forms that are actually made of readily sourced, low-cost materials. This theatrical characteristic is equally present in Lauderdale's *Hall Monitor* (2014). Its sporty blue and white two-tone exterior bulges as if it were adjusting to accommodate the dimensions of mechanical or electronic equipment inside. Lauderdale doubles this theatrical effect by leaving black power chords exposed and incorporating Elfa shelving unit components (vis-à-vis The Container Store) into other works. The pieces smartly toy with the passage of style where over time high design is knocked down to its cheaper iterations; it's why *Interior with Cornice* has the specific look of a 1980s re-interpretation of Bauhaus rather than just Bauhaus.

Lauderdale mines the utopic narratives embedded in the history of design to build his own vocabulary of form. Consequentially, his work slips between associations of Modernist furniture and architecture into other realms where similar codes have been borrowed and particularized such as the aspirational marketing of exercise equipment, transcendental meditation, and the faux-fancy gaudiness common to cheap casinos and strip clubs. His combination of design nostalgia with minimal art just works. It amounts to a precisely observed American Mannerism that is simultaneously earnest and cheeky.

By contrast, Jessica Sanders' minimal works reinforce the natural forms of organic materials such as bee's wax. In both her *Saturation* and *Crumple* paintings, Sanders sets up a regulated action that displays a given material's characteristics more so than the artist's hand. To create her *Crumple* works, Sanders stretches fine suiting linen in different shades of indigo and grey before coating the linen in hot wax. The coated linen is then unstretched, crumpled, and re-stretched. The result is a mini-geology of wrinkles and stress cracks in the wax along with a crust of tiny, sugary particles of broken material. The accumulation of varying thicknesses of the semi-opaque beeswax over the colored linen creates an intricate marbled pattern and an impressive tonal array. Alongside stretches of pure beeswax or uncovered linen, slightly saturated sections look darker and wax-coated areas appear chalky, desaturating the color of the linen underneath.

In the *Saturation* series, Sanders makes sensual wax pours onto raw linen. They are beautiful but with her interest in fixed interventions, I'm more interested when the parameters are set where the material *behaves* rather than when the material is composed. Sanders' works are sensitive, absorbing, and finely executed with handmade frames with unpredictably placed and particular-seeming nails along their edges.

It's a satisfying contrast to see 1980s hyaloid set pieces up against tactile and unpretentious process works. Both Sanders and Lauderdale engage a sort of period style, and each are able to use the attending associations from the strong historical quotations to expand their work. These artists manage to be truly inventive inside what would seem like a tight framework to work with.

– Megan Liu Kincheloe