

HERE, THEN & NOW

April 13, 2012

Tags: [Frank Bowling](#), [Arthur B. Davies](#), [Willard Boepple](#)



Willard Boepple at Lori Bookstein. Courtesy of the artist & Lori Bookstein Fine Art, New York. Photo: Etienne Frossard.

SOARING TOWERS

“**Willard Boepple: New Work**” at Lori Bookstein (through April 28) is an enormously uplifting show – in both a literal and a figurative sense. Entering the gallery, one’s eyes are immediately drawn upward by the three 10- to 11-foot tall but slender works that rise almost to the ceiling of the gallery, interacting nicely with its chaste white walls & 2 supporting white columns. Technically, these three are sculptures, yet in appearance they resemble both sculpture and architecture, being composed of two principal elements. The outer structure is a tall, boxlike wood skeleton that reminded me immediately of what are known, I believe, in Europe, as electricity pylons, and in this country, more often as transmission towers—anyway, steel lattice towers erected to support high-voltage electricity cables far above the ground as they snake their way across the country’s wide open spaces. This is the architectural aspect of Boepple’s pieces, and it doesn’t surprise me a bit to learn (from the gallery’s press release) that “Five years ago he began to consider the parameters of these new tower-like structures after being commissioned by a radio station in Syracuse NY to design a 130 ft. broadcast tower.”

But these external lattice-like elongated boxes are only part of these works of art, as they all also have an internal set of strips and slabs of wood that move in, out and around the external lattice tower in a much more fluid, sculptural way. “Ever” (2010), has a light gray exterior box, with dark gray innards. It is slender, and the most graceful of the three, with the center elements sometimes venturing outside of the scaffolding. “What Gives” (2011) has the most movement. Its exterior box is medium-gray with some red elements, and its wide dynamic slabs of red wood in the center are set at crazy angles to each other, so that they almost float. “Heath” (2012) is like a demure little sister. Both its insides and its outside are charcoal gray (or perhaps blackish brown—anyway, very dark); its innards cling to the outside scaffolding, leaving the center almost empty. All three works on view in the gallery are essentially maquettes, made of wood, and not for sale; replicas, however, are available in aluminum. (Almost as an afterthought, behind a velvet rope in the back part of the gallery, are three small sculptures of the same type, all maybe 30 inches high. All three have gray frames, and their center struts are either all red, all yellow or all blue.)

Comments

April 14, 2012 10:58 AM EDT

This show is simply fantastic! A real change for Boepple and a positive one at that! I wish I could get my hands on one of the smaller steel sculptures. The Blue one is fabulous!

- Edwin

April 14, 2012 12:49 PM EDT