

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2013

MEL KENDRICK



Red Block 3, 2011, wood, Japan color, 15 3/4 x 6 1/4 x 7 in



Untitled, 2012, wood, Japan color, gesso, 68 x 18 3/4 x 16 3/4 in

Opening June 7 and on view through July 8, The Drawing Room in East Hampton presents recent pedestal and floor sculptures in wood and cast concrete by **MEL KENDRICK**, a long time resident of North Haven and New York City. A concurrent exhibition, **ALAN SHIELDS: Inventive Editions 1973-2001**, also on view through July 8, includes selected prints that highlight the late artist's innovations in printmaking.

Since exhibiting his monumental 6-ton black and white striped cast concrete *jacks* at Mary Boone Gallery and in the gardens at the Parrish Art Museum in 2011, Mel Kendrick returns in this exhibition at the Drawing Room to a human scale totemic object to be explored intimately in the round from floor to eye level. His new *Red Block* series offers a dazzling circus of forms and a multiplicity of sight lines to bring the viewer closer. In each work he hollows out shapes defined by his hand tools, carving into an 8-inch solid cube of wood and stacking the "found" negative shape above the positive which becomes the base. In a taller totem his emblematic black and white stripes reappear in the more primitive medium of wood, suggesting an ancient prototype for his *Markers* in cast concrete. Kendrick's transparent process is an articulate language of his own.

Intrigued by both Constructivist and Deconstructivist traditions in the history of sculpture, and by Primitive figuration as well as the geometric tenets of Minimalism, Kendrick carves and shapes the void within the solid cubic block to reconfigure the material in a nuanced balance of negative and positive abstract forms. His self-referential, direct practice exposes the means to the end: the serrated saw cuts, the play of shadows in scooped out tunnels of wood grain and the functional use of pigment to code his saw cuts all indulge the viewer in Kendrick's raw and fundamental vision.

For nearly 30 years since he was first shown at John Weber's Gallery in Soho in 1983, Kendrick has puzzled the dialectic between the inside and the outside of a carved material. In this current body of work, his central concern continues to be a reimagining of the parts of a whole, while demanding a physically closer look by the viewer into prismatic passages of light and shadow. Challenging the solidity of a block of concrete or wood, Kendrick reconfigures its structural mass by displacing density with curious voids in an ever more playful back and forth. Ultimately, he expands the presence of the cube exponentially. This process of reproducing and mutating form in space is carried one step further in the concrete works in which a positive is cast from a mold of the negative and vice versa, challenging our physical and mental engagement in his elegant resolutions.

Each work asserts a different physical relationship for the viewer and evokes a marvelous complexity of ideas and architectures. In the *Red Block* series, the 15" high wood blocks with pigmented exteriors, a jungle gym of chutes and holes and telescoping cones become an abstraction of scientific instruments and observatories. It contrasts with the stately striped 68" high *Untitled*, 2012 a stack of black and white drums, scored and excised in an elegant manifestation of genetic material gone awry. The one outdoor sculpture, a brilliant white sand concrete column, evokes the pristine presence of a Greek marble at an archeological site.

In *Five Point Red Block*, chunks of wood are chiseled out of the corner legs offering a lively anthropomorphism to the disappearing block. A wobbly futuristic architecture is imagined. The balance of void and material, black and white, shadow and light, paint and wood all contribute to the individual history of each sculpture. What emerges from Kendrick's material riddles are metaphorical chunks of civilization, recycled building blocks, chess pieces replayed. Ever intrigued by the infinite capacity of negative shapes of light to energize the medium of sculpture, Kendrick uses it now as the third dynamic material.

Kendrick, who was born in Boston, lives and works in New York. His work has been widely exhibited in the U.S. and abroad, and his art is included in numerous important collections including The Art Institute of Chicago, New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art, Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the Centro Cultural Arte Contemporaneo in Mexico City and the Australian National Gallery in Canberra.

Gallery hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10-5; Sunday 11-5

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