

# sculpture

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Right: David Goodman, *Monolith*, 2017. Acrylic on wood, 72 x 48 x 24 in. Below right: Will Corwin, *Poor Dead King*, 2016–17. Cast lead, 14 x 21 x 6 in. Both from “Politicizing Space.”



## NEW YORK

### “Politicizing Space”

Anya and Andrew Shiva Gallery, John Jay College of Criminal Justice “Politicizing Space,” curated by Charlotta Kotik, took as its premise the fact that space can be made political by manmade interventions and used to control human movement and behavior. Kotik emphasized the need to understand how this stratagem works in light of Trump administration policies such as the Mexican border wall. The 11 artists in the show addressed the subject through both figurative and abstract works, underscoring Kotik’s assertion that even nonobjective imagery can be used to direct or restrict people.

Carin Riley’s *Caryatid I* (2017) is a complex, seemingly abstract rendering of the female figures that support Greek architecture. For Kotik, the image implies how women in ancient Greece could be seen as both sources of strength and objects of suppression. Will Corwin’s lead sculpture of a fallen king and his mount plays with the power statements of traditional equestrian monuments. David Goodman’s *Monolith* (2017), a seemingly simple construction of painted wood, suggests the gauntlet of airport metal detectors—an open post for security observation. Allan McCollum’s *The Dog from Pompei* (1990–91) is a white Hydrocal cast taken directly from the ash-encrusted body of a dog that perished in the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE. Along with two other dogs in the exhibition, this creature symbolizes a lack of freedom, as well as psychic and physical enslavement.

Kara Rooney’s Hydrocal *Alter No.3* (2015) represents a collapsed altar, a fragmented ruin that marks a lost religious space where spiritual activi-



ties were once conducted. Lauren Clay’s *A tree trunk, a cottage, a cliff* (2017), a 20-foot-long stretch of vinyl wallpaper embellished with an abstract sculpture of four white, bent tubular forms, gives the impression of a closed expanse, delineated by gray stripes. Space may be abstractly rendered here, but it is nevertheless under strict control. Filipe Cortez’s *Traffic Cone* (2015), a plaster effigy of the real thing, also refers to control and direction. And Paul Anthony Smith’s untitled work from 2016, a pigment print with spray paint detailing a chain link fence on top of a cement wall, clearly emphasizes the physical barriers imposed on people.

The other artists in the show presented equally compelling imagery. Lan Tuazon’s ink-on-paper drawing of a parking lot implies how social hierarchies are determined even in mundanely functional spaces. Andrew Ross’s video installation *The Secret Lives of Mole People* (2017), which investigates the New York phenomenon of people living in subway tunnels, focuses on the space of the feared “other.” Together, the works in “Politicizing Space” brought home how space is not only a three-dimensional quantity but also a cultural construction, whose dimensions and uses can be manipulated and limited by those in power.

—Jonathan Goodman

## NEW YORK

### Zheng Lu

#### Sundaram Tagore Gallery

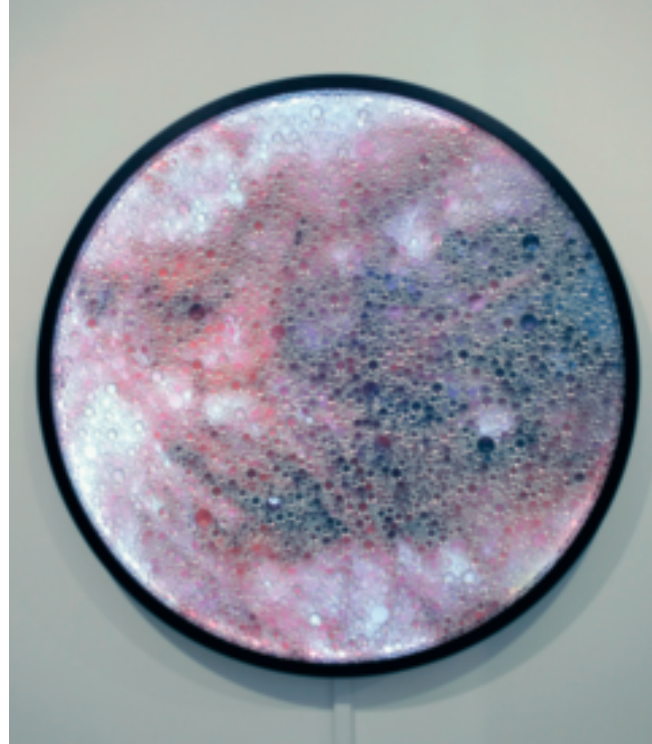
A first impression of Zheng Lu’s recent exhibition, “Undercurrent,” brought to mind the term “sublime.” Set against pristine white walls, huge silvery waves seemed about to crash through space. The obvious association was to Hokusai’s 19th-century print *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, but stylistically, Zheng’s waves have more in common with Northern Song black ink painting, adapted in Japan as Sumi-e, whose sharply delineated brushwork has been compared to samurai sword strokes by the prominent Asian scholar Sherman E. Lee. One couldn’t help



but notice the sharp edges of the waves breaking on the floor and floating in the air, and it soon became evident that the metal sculptures depend, at least in part, on calligraphic gesture. The interaction of solid and void projected myriad shadows, apparent chaos ordered by art.

Zheng is fascinated with the idea of opposites like liquid/water versus solid/metal. While Western dualism, rooted in Platonic ideas, is viewed as simple binary opposition, Eastern forms focus on unity from difference. In Taoism, the two poles of yin and yang interplay dynamically. Looking at Zheng's works, we are reminded of this dynamism, which causes arrested motion to appear as an alternate form of stability.

His interest in liquid splashes with an underlying dualism goes back to *Crashing Waves* (2015), a stainless steel and lacquer installation covered by an illusionistic sky-like canopy of clouds floating on a blue background. The effect is of endlessness rather than confinement. A related stainless steel sculpture, *Water in Dripping-Billows* (2015), demonstrates similar formal and



Left: Zheng Lu, *Insustantiality No. 2*, 2017. Lightbox, image, convex lens, and glass, 49 x 49 x 3.5 in. Below: Zheng Lu, installation view of “Undercurrent,” 2017.

philosophical preoccupations. But this time, Zheng surrounds the waves with a frame, as if saying that such natural elemental forces can be contained. *Unknown Circle* (2015), which consists of liquid drops floating in space, takes a different form. Large drops are placed higher than smaller ones, leading to a disorienting perceptual experience. Floating indoors, they throw shadows on the walls, multiplying their number and further intensifying the solid/void contrast.

*Insustantiality No. 2* continues to explore unity through opposition, but from a different perspective—as though looking at the world through a camera lens. Nebulous red forms emerge from behind a convex lens with myriad bubble condensations. The resulting shapes can be read as galaxies, or as germs seen under a microscope. *Undercurrent No. 2* (2017), a related tondo, contains drops of liquid condensation under the convex frame, which offers a reversal of human perception—

a topsy-turvy world where water usually seen below is above and galaxies situated above are below.  
—Thalia Vrachopoulos

**HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA,  
CANADA**  
**Tove Storch**  
Mount Saint Vincent University  
Art Gallery

Danish sculptor Tove Storch approaches sculpture as a way of thinking about materials and looking at space. Arguably, so do all sculptors, but Storch harks back to Minimalists and post-Minimalists such as Donald Judd, Richard Serra, and Jackie Winsor in her refusal to allow thoughts about anything else to intrude on her work. The content of Storch's work is, quite simply, space and stuff, presented within the theater of the gallery. While the work, as material and space, exists regardless of its perception, as art, it exists only in the viewer's immediate reception of it. One experiences it in the moment, like music, not over time, like a philosophical argument.

In her first North American exhibition, Storch resisted any temptation to introduce viewers to her work or to sum up her practice. Instead, she presented one large piece that directly engaged the architecture of the gallery. Located in a neo-Brutalist building that opened in 1971, the space is a long, high rectangle constructed of concrete, which is visible above the display walls. The ceiling, over 20 feet high, is an open grid of concrete coffers, each approximately three feet square.

*Untitled* (2017) was made up of 137 small-diameter, mild-steel rods of the kind often referred to as “pencil rod.” Fixed to the ceiling coffers or along their borders, the rods ran

