

REVIEW OF EXHIBITIONS

JOHANNES GIRARDONI AT STEPHEN HALLER

Pairing wax colored in rich hues with wood, Johannes Girardoni has concocted a winning combination. The texture and aroma of these works are as captivating as their curved forms and dramatic colors. The titles of the pieces (all 2004) reflect the names of the pigments that Girardoni mixes into various types of beeswax from all over the world. While the colors lean toward loud, the sculpted shapes are quiet and subtle, both whimsical and architectural. These pieces derive strength from their simple straightforward contrast of materials: the fabricated and the found.

Diptych-Orange Umber pairs a rescued, rough-hewn beam with an elegant squared column of wax that echoes the proportions of the wood, complete with a notch at the top. The two symmetrical sections are connected along the vertical, and the contrasting materials attract and adhere. For *Stacked. 1-Chrome Earth Yellow*, Girardoni places a long, orange wax runner atop a six-foot “balance beam.” The 4-inch-wide wax segment runs the entire length and is gently sloped at either end. *Monopod (Pair) Dioxane Mauve* places two purple “huts” on stilts composed of



Johannes Girardoni: *Line/7-Cad. Yellow Deep*, 2004, Beeswax, pigment, wood, 66 1/2 x 87 1/2 x 15 1/2 inches; at Stephen Haller

slender pieces of pale wood. Viewers can look underneath and inside the purple forms for a full sensory immersion in chroma and aroma. The softly rounded corners and peaks of the roofs demonstrate the artist’s dexterity with the medium; he leaves areas of rough texture intact to reveal the handcrafted nature of the work. *Untitled-(4.1 Ultra Violet Dk.)* follows the form of a ziggurat. This small, deep purple object sits confidently atop a slab of found wood mounted to the wall.

Perhaps the most playful of the group is *Line/7-Cad. Yellow Deep*, a continuous, 87-inch wide encaustic rectangle with a

rippled top. This undulating yellow-orange wiggle of wax literally rises to the occasion on a simple wooden table with long legs. *Licht Objekt 2-Preussisch Blau* deviates from the other works on view in not having a wood component. Four purple-blue slabs (each a horizontal rectangle) are wall-mounted edge to edge, one atop the other, to produce a sturdy vertical form. Almost like pavers covered with notches and dents, they bear the roughness of a worked and worn surface. This sculpture holds the light in a particularly striking way, making the other pieces seem matte by comparison. -Tracey Hummer