

Article by Melissa Steckbauer in Berlin; Sunday, Jan. 22, 2012

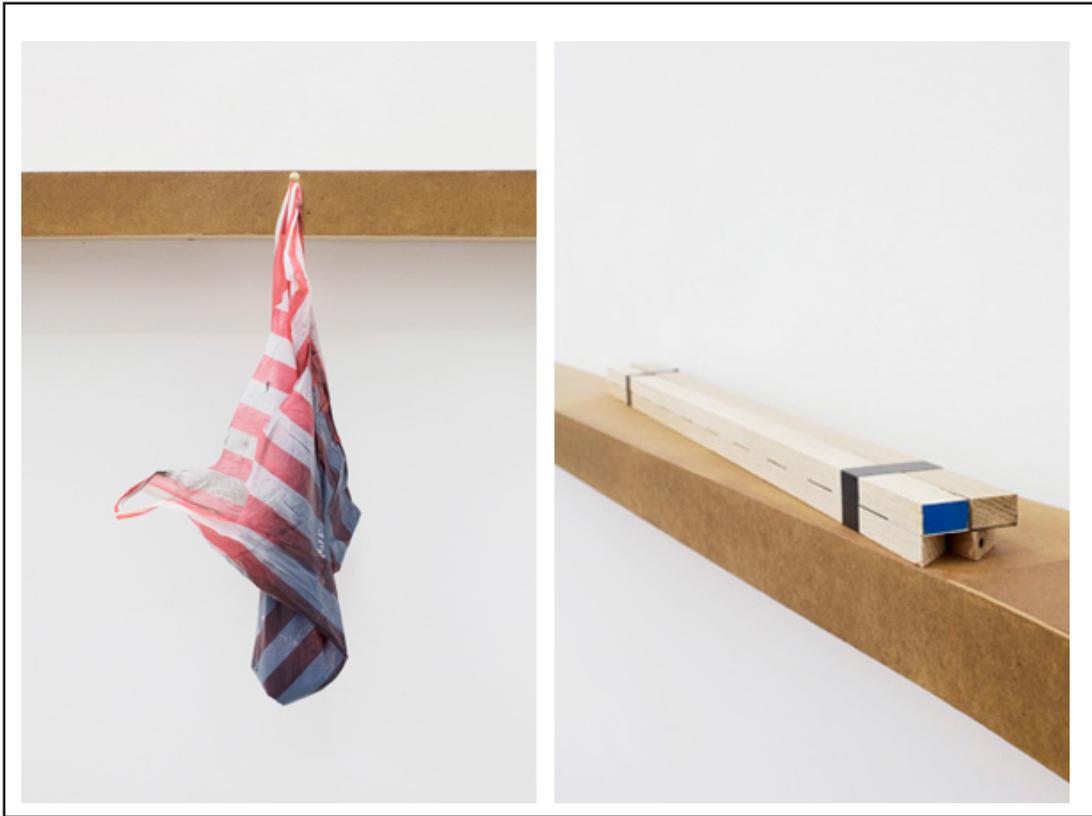
A sweeping wooden frame just blocks the main entrance of Tanya Leighton's gallery door. Nothing can be quite as intimidating in the arts as coming into contact with those select doors, lists, and private parties where to "pass" is still a measure of self-assurance. As it is the holiday season my brain kindly warns me that this could also be construction work. Feeling uninvited and awkward, I crossed the threshold. Naturally it's a harmless installation, part of the work on view from Sean Edward's first solo exhibition in Germany, Remaining Only.



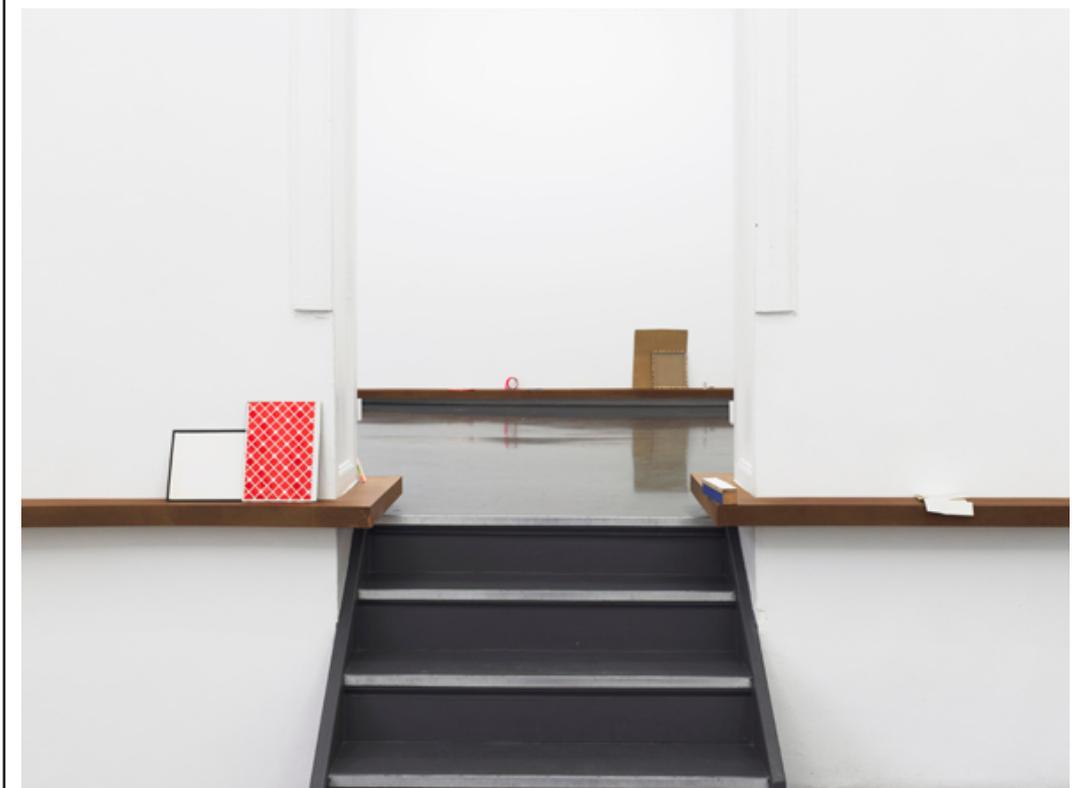
http://www.berlinartlink.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/EDWARDS-2011-0035_2.jpg Sean Edward – "Remaining Only" (2011), installation view; courtesy the artist and Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin

The wooden-ish frame—approximately a shoebox wide—rounds the entire space, slicing it in half vertically and creating a Tetris kind of cut through the two exhibition spaces; it reaches waist-high in the front room and floor-level in the elevated back room, where the plank restructures itself proportional to the space as a tiny shelf. The frame also blocks the entrance to the gallery office —perhaps a nod to the aforementioned feeling created by guarded spaces—and what, if not the office, could be more privy in a gallery?

TANYA LEIGHTON



As for the hanging, the value placed on the selected objects relies more on cool headedness and self-curation than on a heart-thumping necessity for making, as the pieces could have as easily been crafted as found, bought, or stolen as the press release states. That said, their positioning is musical as the assortment of objects follow an up and down arrangement with screaming blasts of color balanced by tone-deaf scraps of plain paper and strips of wood. Of course amidst the melodic choir one may hear some rote melodies: the red and white striped and dirtied plastic bag hanging like a Christmas stocking, the literal flecks of neon (tape rolls, Post-its), etc.



TANYA LEIGHTON



http://www.berlinartlink.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/EDWARDS-2011-0035_detail1.jpg Sean Edward – “Remaining Only” (2011), installation view, detail; courtesy the artist and Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin

This familiarity of procedure is the only challenge to the sophisticated luster and rhythm of the overall show. Edwards’ strength is his simple use of the structural divide to destabilize the gallery architecturally while at a micro level using the plank to magnetically tether all of the vibrating bits of color and form to itself. It is this adoration of texture and color that I find tricky: days after viewing the show, as I walked the streets I was struck by the brightness of matching traffic lights and neon signs popping out of the Berlin gray; thus, employing another simple but effective pleasure in art viewing, “the come-along”. However, the possible danger is in his relying on the “coolness” of Berlin’s neo-trash aesthetics. In Edwards’ case, it’s the common ability to somehow mix office supplies with rigamarole and turn up with serious post-postmodern reliquaries. Regardless, I dig it. I heart his gently political side, his color/texture amorousness, and especially his inebriating use of space. Kudos!