

art ltd.

Andrew Hayes: "Passages" at Seager Gray Gallery

by barbara morris

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For many years, Seager Gray Gallery has presented an annual "Art of the Book" exhibition, a genre that often reinvents reading material—whether a richly-bound volume or trashy pulp fiction—as a found object, recontextualizing it in the best Duchampian fashion and thereby subverting its meaning. In Andrew Hayes' hybrid sculptures of metal and books, the content of the volume is instead incidental to the formal forces at play. Hayes, originally raised in Arizona, now a North Carolina resident, recently presented "Passages" at Seager Gray, comprised of 16 works, including a triptych, using materials of steel, altered books and paint.

While the pieces might suggest maquettes for monumental abstract sculptures, perhaps like those of Tony Smith, these more intimate works offer a slightly quirky aesthetic and inner logic all their own. The clever ways in which the different geometric shapes and contrasting materials are nestled together renders them visual puzzles. *Guard* (2015), for example, uses a modified rectangular prism shape of dark brown steel—some edges are truncated, others rounded. A hollowed out lower arch section is filled with the pages from anonymous texts, stripped from their bindings and contorted into a tight curve, bending back upon itself. While suggesting a portal, this doorway is firmly shut. Dark umber meets yellowed book edges and a cream and charcoal texture, created by text, while small red circular bits of hardware on the left side provide a surprising spot of vivid color.

Gyron (2015), which alludes to a triangular geometric shape found on a heraldic shield, offers up a dusky angular section of metal from which an elegantly curving section of paper drapes, almost like fabric, off the lower corner. Here one may note depressed tabs indicating letters of the alphabet—"MN," "OP," etc. In *Swage* (2015) a cream-colored metal base houses a gracefully curving band of book, the interior shaved or sanded away until the blurring text and paper shimmer, liked the ticked coat of an exotic cat. Hayes' elegant and minimal sculptures are on one level precisely about the negation of the text—now locked firmly within the reductive sculpture, the ink of words on the page distilled to a texture. With some of the works alluding to openings or fissures, more often impassable than not, one meaning of the title of the exhibition is implied—the other, of course, the "passages" of text forever sealed away within.

Image:

Gyron

2015

Andrew Hayes

Steel, altered book

19" x 10"x 3"

Photo: courtesy Seager Gray Gallery