

Artforum, Critic's Picks, Kate Sutton, March 2014

ARTFORUM



Mexico City

Nina Canell

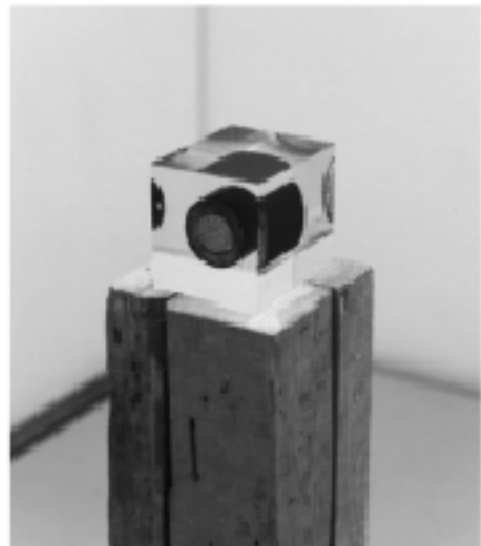
LULU

Bajío 231, La Puertita Roja, Colonia Roma, Cuauhtémoc
February 8–April 6

Nina Canell's four-piece exhibition charges this one-room gallery with the kind of ionic imbalance sensed seconds before static electricity discharges—a phenomenon often only recognized after the fact. Canell's aim, it seems, is not in release or neutralization, but rather in the suspension within this tension. In this sense, the exhibition echoes the semantic structure of its title, "(Near Here)," which floats its core within uncertain parentheses.

Near Here, 2014, offers a small clear acrylic cube, embedded with a cross section of a thick cable wire, the silver pearls of its innards spayed in beautiful ruin. The surprising prettiness of the object (it could be mistaken for a Venetian glass paperweight) hardly acknowledges the violence necessary to cleave the cable. It rests like a trophy atop a weathered wooden pedestal in the center of the room. In contrast to this gesture toward monumentality, *Forgotten Curve*, 2014, consists of little more than a single thread, whose few inches are delineated by a gradation in color: from lime-green to lemon, orange, and, finally, a soft sour cherry. One end is unraveled into a yawning Y, which is pressed in place between two sheets of glass and framed. On a similar scale, *Another Mender*, 2014, presents a chain of calcified nails, dangling end to end in deference to the pull of a magnet planted behind the wall. The pale, slender stick of *Halfway Between Opposite Ends*, 2010, is scarred with dark capillaries, seemingly seared into its surface. The almost inconceivable delicacy of this "drawing" is the product of an impossibly brutal act: The artist has doused the wood in salt water and then shot 5,000 volts of electricity from one end to the other.

In the exhibition text, Canell quotes Steven Connor: "Infinite force moving through near infinite littleness." It is this nod toward the infinite that transforms these objects into exquisite monsters, rather than just precious souvenirs.



Nina Canell, *Near Here*, 2014, cable, acrylic, wood, 5 1/2 x 5 x 42 1/2".

— Kate Sutton