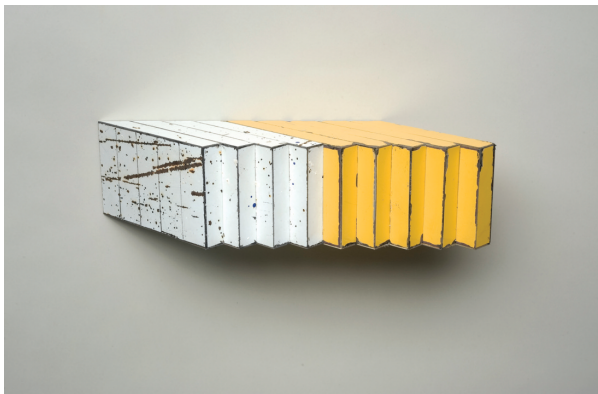


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**SANTA FE**  
**Ted Larsen: "New Works"**  
**at Nüart Gallery**

"A work needs only to be interesting," wrote minimalist sculptor Donald Judd in "Specific Objects." Judd's seminal 1965 essay comes to mind at Ted Larsen's exhibition "New Works," on show at Nüart Gallery. The New Mexico artist grew up in South Haven, Michigan and Santa Fe, and spent years painting color studies of landscapes and buildings before switching to sculpture. He hammers out elegant geometric forms from the grittiest of materials: steel that is salvaged from junked cars. Larsen shapes these weathered bits of metal into patchwork patterns around substructures made from marine-grade plywood. In "New Works," there are off-kilter cubes, simple wedges and ambiguous, undulating forms, all small enough to hold in your hands. They are mounted on the walls in a neat line, projecting out far enough to cast playful shadows beneath them.

At first, the works seem like a postminimalist subversion of Judd's philosophy, with their diminutive scale and rough edges. They have a distinctly hand-hued quality that encourages up-close inspection. The yellow and white planes of *Serial Killer #6* are covered in a Milky Way of rusty freckles. *Back Front* is mounted with its face to the wall and its posterior wooden artifice exposed, proving Larsen's penchant for tidy joinery. Larsen is said to be friends with Richard Tuttle, the postminimalist artist who lives part-time in Abiquiú, New Mexico. Tuttle and Larsen seem complementary, with the former as a loud and experimental joker, and the latter a subtle provocateur. View the

artwork from a few steps back, however, and dense details vanish in favor of purely minimal lines. A different set of associations emerges. Now the yellow-and-red stripes of *jackel* sing like a Daniel Buren painting. The skewed lines of *checked* echo minimalist forefather Kazimir Malevich, while the staggered blocks of *stepped out* recall Robert Morris. From this perspective, Larsen's dialogue with minimalist history seems too polite to indicate true rebellion, which brings us back to Judd's essay. "Specific Objects" was considered a rallying cry for Minimalism, but in recent years, scholars have argued that the piece has a murkier message. "Judd wrote of a new kind of three-dimensional work that incorporated aspects of painting and sculpture but was neither," wrote *New York Times* critic Roberta Smith in 2013. "He had in mind something much more robust and physically eccentric than Carl Andre's plates or Sol LeWitt's grids." Larsen's works seem like organic extensions of this ideology. They don't aim for pure Minimalism, but through their singular presence, they playfully advance Judd's famous musings, albeit in a wholly contemporary direction.

—JORDAN EDDY

"SERIAL KILLER #6," 2012, **Ted Larson**  
SALVAGE STEEL, MARINE-GRADE PLYWOOD,  
SILICONE, VULCANIZED RUBBER, HARDWARE  
3" x 12½" BY 3½"  
PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND NÜART GALLERY