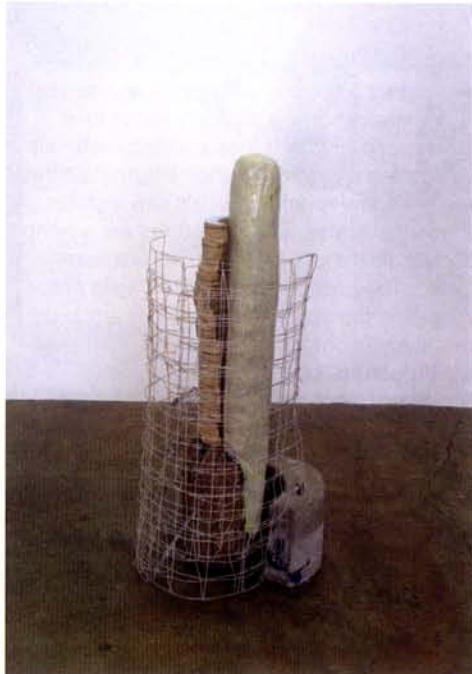


LOS ANGELES

David McDonald: "Self Portraits" at Carter & Citizen

David McDonald makes modest and unassuming sculptures from low-tech materials that command attention. Carefully arranged in the small space are five human-scaled floor sculptures presented in conjunction with five small wall works, each an amalgamation of found elements that work in concert with each other. The wall works, titled *Fractures*, (all works 2011), are arrangements of chips of paint and concrete collaged together on colored backgrounds; they call to mind fragments of a shattered world map, carefully pieced together. McDonald makes wholes from found parts giving new life to what would otherwise be discarded. His ingenious way of conjoining disparate materials emphasizes not only their formal qualities, but also how the formal is linked to the conceptual. The floor sculptures are self portraits whose titles reference different aspects of the self, a self that is quiet and unassuming but assertive when it needs to be.

Each sculpture contains a painted cylindrical element that emanates from a concrete base. In *Self Portrait (Protected Self)* it is a red shape that is encased in unpainted



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cement and topped with a wooden box-like structure. Bits of discarded wood painted in pastel colors are gathered near its top, while the rebar that holds the piece together sticks out from the base. McDonald does not mask his process or apologize for his choice of materials; indeed, his commitment to making art from building materials gives his work a sense of purpose. *Self Portrait (Visible Self)* combines stacked shapes of curved wood with light blue painted tops alongside a vertical cylinder painted a glossy white. This entire assemblage is surrounded by white metal fencing like what would be used to create a small chicken-coop: the visible self becomes partially hidden or protected. *Self Portrait (Underground Self)* couples a stack of small square wooden boxes with a white cylindrical shape grounded to a concrete base. Poles of rebar of different heights, each with a red dot on top, protrude from its base while simultaneously extending out across the floor.

There is an initial awkwardness to these sculptures that soon disappears as one realizes there is nothing arbitrary about their construction. They infuse building materials with grace and through their enigmatic titles, suggest how rough materials can sign for emotional states. The sculptures are among McDonald's most personal, yet are also iconic. The juxtaposition of the fragile *Fractures* and the sturdy *Self Portraits* articulate the myriad contradictions within a self that are brought to light through the sensitivity of McDonald's constructions.

—JODY ZELLEN