

Neil Tetkowski's Earth Fragments



Above: *Installation View of Earth Fragments.*

Facing page, top left: *Sliced Earth Construct.* 20 x 18 x 4 in.

Facing page, top right: *Sliced Mesa.*

Facing page, below left: *Earth Leap.* 13 x 14 x 23 in.

Facing page, below right: *Blooming Conflux.* 11 x 10 x 21 in.

EARTH FRAGMENTS, NEIL TETKOWSKI'S EXHIBITION IN Chelsea, New York's HPGRP Gallery consists of 32 works all completed in 2012, representing iterations on three forms – wall relief, disk and table-top sculpture, developed through three bodies of work executed in New York, Arizona and Maine. The thread that binds the forms and the bodies of work together is their shared constituents – cut, slashed, manipulated and reconfigured fragments harvested from a single form, the disk, or more specifically the rim of the disk. At the least, one leaves the exhibition interpreting it as variations of form. Yet sustained consideration reveals a window onto Tetkowski's artistic trajectory and the inner turmoil it has apparently resolved.

Standing between the unfettered view of the 28 wall pieces are the gallery's structural columns and four small sculptures atop pedestals. An impeccable

white cube, the gallery boasts shiny concrete floors, pristine white walls and massive columns all in stark contrast to the exhibition's title, concept and mood. This dramatic opposition between gallery space and the exhibition's gestalt, magnifies rather than parodies the conceptual effect. These works represent a three-fold resolution – formal, conceptual, structural – marking a transformative moment in the development of an artist, maybe.

The disk – plate, blank, slug, platter, charger – has seen multifarious iterations in the last half-century, most notably in the vanguard works of Peter Voulkos. The transcendence of this form emerges from the artist's handling of the rim and interior space.

A Review by Adam Welch

Tetkowski's rims have the illusion of volume as thin wall doubles over forming a recess, framing the disks' interior with both shadow and suggestion of mass. It is the space framed by the rim that remains for subjective expression however much lacking sculptural significance. The removal of the interior of the disk marks Tetkowski's departure from his practice and the history of the form, liberating the disk from decorative ends as in the works of *Sliced Earthen Construct* and *Sliced Mesa*.







Another aspect of resolution is structural, tied with the former which plays itself out, though Tetkowski may be unaware he is working to resolve. From function to pure expression, the conceptual implications of the disk stem from the commingling of those traditions and the inevitable tension that is borne out of the confluence. The disk is a hermetic, a closed system with its own rules to produce and communicate meaning, which the art world understands. The result of Tetkowski's gesture is the disillusionment in this activity's tenuous and inevitable conclusion – when the disk is no longer disk, but pure sculpture. As such, *Blooming Conflux* is Tetkowski's answer to Voukos' *Rocking Pot*, which began and ended the philosophical question of this broader conceptual system. In conjunction with his other self-contained modest-sized hermetic sculpture, *Earth Leap*, *Terra Rig* and *Sliced Navigation* which use these components devoid of a contextual link to the disk, its placement on the wall, leaves only the taste of formal investigation.

For all the excitement evident for Tetkowski in this new direction, these works might not yet embody

Facing page, top: Sliced Navigation.
Facing page, below: Installation View of Earth Fragments.
Above: Rocking Blade. 28 x 15 x 5 in.

the complete Tetkowski, despite the resolve suggested in the titles. While his earlier works such as *Common Ground World Project*, the *Kanazawa Project* and *Ground War* struggle with human complexities manifest in a performative slant, his current body of work lacks such urgency. I believe, however, this is the real Tetkowski, fashioning works of artistic importance and formal innovation, not to save the world, but rather to save himself. These works are fragments, as the exhibition's title explicates, parts slashed and sliced away, revealing his true-self.

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