



David Baskin, installation view of "STORE-BOUGHT," 2023. Photo: Nick Knight and Freight+Volume

David Baskin

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Freight+Volume

Bright solid colors—hot pink, light blue, lime green, red, and purple—compose the tonal spectrum of the cast polyurethane resin sculptures featured in "STORE-BOUGHT," David Baskin's current exhibition (on view through March 25, 2023). Two imprints of the forms, "embossed" into heavily textured paper displayed in shadow-box frames, hang on one wall. The sculptures themselves are arranged along another wall, where a lengthy plinth proffers a row of 15 rather ornamental pieces resembling squiggly lines. The colors are staggered, so there appear to be more variations than the actual four repeated shapes. Each tangle of form stands about two and a half feet high off the plinth's surface, supported on a single pole and base. Appealing, even cute, these scribbles in space are flattish—rounded, but essentially graphic and two dimensional, like lollipops, pancakes on sticks, or squashed, simple knots on signposts. Three enlarged, human-size versions of the same forms rotate slowly on disks standing on the floor, like prop displays in a department store. Castings, one for each of the four models, are exhibited on another horizontal pedestal. The work imparts a futuristic, retro, popsicle feel, like standing signage in an alien script from a corny, camp version of the 1960s cartoon show "The Jetsons."

That's approximately what Baskin's new work looks like. But there is a bit more to it. Baskin purchased the four original sculptures from the big-box store The Home Depot. Anonymously designed (undoubtedly by corporate consensus) and fabricated overseas, the chromed, abstract pieces are made for mass consumption. The promotional literature for one such work reads: "...this aesthetic masterpiece will add interest to a room and compliment your carefully curated contemporary modern style. We understand how important your home is and how decorating your kitchen, dining room, or bedroom with classy contemporary art can help make it a place that reflects who you are. We believe in the power modern art has in creating not just a home but your home. We believe in feeling good about our home's environment and we think you do too."

Too bad Andy Warhol died too soon to take advantage of the global mass marketplace on this level, as indeed the de-rarification, and projected utopian egalitarianism, of art was the primary tenet, target, and goal of Pop art. Baskin has reversed the methodology and concept however. His versions are limited to an edition of half a dozen, whereas the "originals" are limitless. And they might go nicely with a cat print or landscape purchased from IKEA, unless it occurs to you to go online and order a pre-framed giclée that you can see digitally animated hanging over your couch. One might also scale them up and plop them outside of suburban office parks. One on every corner. Red state, blue state. Likable, harmless, generic art for one and all. The mind boggles.