

ARTFORUM

Richard Tuttle

PACE | 534 WEST 25TH STREET

534 West 25th Street

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Since the mid-1960s, Richard Tuttle has made art marked by its conspicuous refusal to occupy space. Self-effacing in scale and thoroughly abstract, Tuttle's work begets an acute awareness of both itself and its environment. In Tuttle's universe, there is less to see, so we see more deeply.

The five sensitive sculptures currently on view prove no exception. The culmination of a series begun in 2010, these works, titled *Systems, VIII–XII*, 2012, each comprise from one to four discrete sculptural elements arranged on oversize gray platforms. As the platforms' slight remove from the gallery's walls suggests, these are works meant to be viewed in the round, and they come into focus through a subtle succession of formal and material accords, enacted in space. Throughout, Tuttle's materials—metal, wood, paper, plastic, textiles, and string, among others—are new; his palette, vibrant and insistently readymade.

In his standout *Systems, IX*, 2012, intercalated foam planks, colored a chalky monochrome blue, lie low to the ground in a W-shaped array. An inflected metal rod threads under the topmost layer, upsetting its delicate balance. Poised on the structure's center, a bundle of fabric strips in a spectrum of pastel yellows, greens, and pinks causes the planks to bevel slightly under its weight. Nearby, six blunt wooden beams recede in parallel pairs of ascending height, their vertical rise countering the foam's horizontal spread. Atop the shortest pair rests a constellation of spherical forms: On the left, the unraveled end of a white yarn ball arcs elegantly toward the floor; on the right, seven modeled, hollow orbs accent the fullness of the ball and its counterpart, the cloth bundle. Tuttle's construction is such that the work appears at once painstakingly deliberate and offhandedly demure. Lacking visible nails, glue, or other adhesives, the piece hovers between cohesion and breakdown: Nothing, it seems, is holding it together. Snag the rod or tilt the fabric, and the whole thing might fall apart.



Richard Tuttle, *Systems, IX*, 2012, wood, string, metal, fabric, plastic, foam, paint, 44" x 17' 6" x 9' 3".

— Courtney Fiske

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