

ART

REVIEW

From Disparity to Cohesion

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[Excerpted from a full review on two artists. See full review in The Post-Standard/Stars on Page 11 in the September 1, 2013 issue.]

The presentation of unrelated entities/images also goes to the heart of Wessen's assemblages, which he creates from found objects and calls "Foundlings." His work bears the overtones of Joseph Cornell's surreal assemblages, but Wessen's are more architectural in look and choice of objects than Cornell's and tend to be more baroque in style.

For example, in the ornate piece titled "Room 202," Wessen has arranged (among other things) carved pieces of wooden molding, a cigar mold, tin tile, a decorative silver plate, aluminum grill and a door knob into a densely composed wall mounted sculpture that is a study in contrasting textures. In the piece titled "Summer," a clock surround shimmers in imitation of the radiant golden rays of a 17th century Bernini starburst. A rusty, hand-forged garden implement sits on top of the piece, extending its gnarled tines to the heavens. Even with this density of objects and riots of texture within the assemblages, Wessen is able to strike visual harmony and balance with the objects seeming to fit together just right.

The more minimalist pieces, such as "Go," "Trinity" and "Glasnost," tend to place a greater emphasis or focus on specific objects rather than on a cast of many. In "Trinity," Wessen nestles each of three tiny, speckled quail eggs in a small concave piece of brass, which sit within a small vertical box. The vertical provides a strong contrast to the horizontal slats of wood (a drying rack) that serve as the background and context for the box with the eggs, which is the clear focal point for this piece.

Other pieces by Wessen have a shrine-like quality to them, mini-altars paying tribute to cast offs of the everyday; orphaned objects he reincarnates as "Foundlings."