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David Gilbert's Unassuming Sculptures Become Angelic Photographs

by Deirdre Hering | 12/21/2011 4:00 AM |  No Comments

The objects that David Gilbert creates are humble enough—garlands of crumpled paper, tangles of yarn. One of them, entitled “Hung Paper” (2011), greets the viewer upon entering the Lower East Side’s Klaus Von Nichtssagend Gallery. The work is true to its title: a wrinkled sheet of paper just barely grazes the floor, hung from the ceiling on a single length of yarn. It’s an unassuming piece on its own. But the rest of Gilbert’s sculptures take on a new, grander life through photography. *Angels* (through January 22), features dramatically lit and carefully photographed portraits of his otherwise modest sculptures. Gilbert then enlarges the images into giant prints; with this added layer of representation, he monumentalizes the otherwise messy and mundane.

In “Blue Angel” (2011), a piece of white fabric hangs carelessly from a blue-painted wall, stuck with stickers and bits of tape. The objects are instantly recognizable—the sculptures that he captures are not transformative on their own. Rather, they showcase the formal qualities of each element of the object; fabric is draped, paint is splashed, lengths of string are knotted. It is the remarkable clarity of his prints that alter the sculptures. The prints are so crystal clear that it is almost like looking through a glass window onto the scenes themselves. The prints shown in *Angels* are proof of photography’s capacity for changing a subject. The sculptures that Gilbert makes are familiar (especially when showed beside “Hung Paper”), but their representations render them anything but expected.