

ARTFORUM

NEW YORK

David Scanavino

KLAUS VON NICHTSSAGEND GALLERY

The generic title (“Recent Work”) and dull palette of David Scanavino’s first New York solo exhibition suggest ambivalence over the potential of artistic singularity, channeled through a consideration of figure and ground. The artist cast an eight-foot rope four times in different positions. In each instance, the weighty impression left by the cord substitutes gravity for the artist’s indexical mark, and the works obscure the manipulations that yielded these casts-cum-negatives. On opposing walls, Scanavino has applied paper pulp by hand to form a pair of squares. One such monochrome is made from mulched copies of the New York Post, a tabloid noted for turning out its pages of content without achieving anything like a pure ground, or textual news; the other piece, which recycles craft paper, articulates a regenerative aspect of the works. A photograph of the reused-paper piece hangs on a perpendicular wall, its glass pane reflecting the site-specific sculptural work it depicts.

The artist’s interest in unitary structures is clarified by his installation comprising a linoleum tile floor, whereby the artificiality of the gallery as white box plays off the institutional nature of the material. The linoleum cube in *Untitled* (one square foot), 2008, nearly blends into the floor; each of its surfaces is the size of a single tile. While the interplay of flatness and protrusion immediately destabilizes the visual experience, it is Scanavino’s examination of an illusory “ground” that ultimately trips up the viewer.

— Alex Gartenfeld



David Scanavino, *untitled (New York Post)*, 2008, newspaper pulp, 22 1/4 x 11 7/8”.