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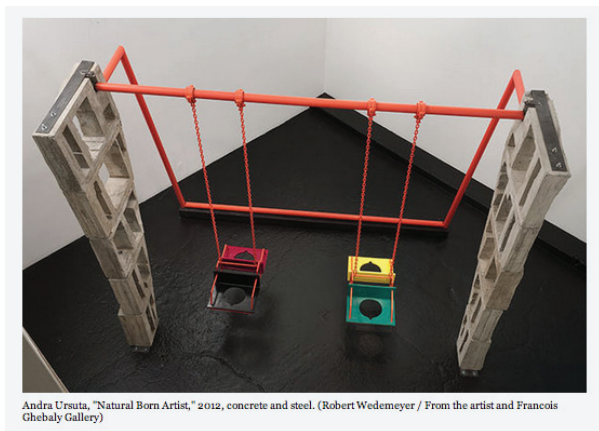


CULTURE MONSTER
ALL ARTS, ALL THE TIME

“Review: Andra Ursuta evokes disintegration at Francois Ghebaly”

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Andra Ursuta, "Natural Born Artist," 2012, concrete and steel. (Robert Wedemeyer / From the artist and Francois Ghebaly Gallery)

For her first L.A. solo exhibition at Francois Ghebaly Gallery, Romanian-born artist Andra Ursuta has built a ruin of a modernist swing set.

Propped up on either side by precarious stacks of hollow concrete blocks that form a kind of lattice, a smooth, bright orange crossbar supports two swings, each composed of two seats hung back to back. Painted in bright colors, the seats have holes cut into them. They are at once geometric abstractions — circles within squares — and toilets.

The potentially uncontrollable distribution of excrement that this scenario implies is a parent's nightmare, and yet, is also regulated. Swings are in essence pendulums, predictable in their back and forth movement. They are also in many cases the closest a child comes to flight. Ursuta's static swing set oddly manages to evoke this tension between control and abandon, routine and freedom that defines growing up.

Yet it is also already a ruin. The crumbly concrete blocks on either side could be decaying castoffs from a Frank Lloyd Wright building, or as the press release suggests, from Eastern European war monuments of the 1970s. At any rate, it is the disintegration of modernist ideals that appears to be at stake here, an entropic falling apart — through play — of our best-laid plans to institute order and discipline.