

# The New York Times

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## Art:

By MICHAEL BRENSON

John Monti and Mary Carlson (Curt Marcus Gallery, 578 Broadway, near Prince Street): John Monti builds striking vertical plywood constructions and paints parts of them black. The sculptures link a number of traditions, most noticeably Tribal Art and Constructivism. Monti is also trying to bring to deceptively simple sculptural shapes the referential breadth that has been characteristic of recent art, and the brashness that has been characteristic of New York art since World War II.

The works in this show reach out in many directions. They may sit on the floor, hug the wall, unfold into space and stretch toward the ceiling. Just as important to their scale is the shifting points of view. Like few other frontal sculptures that cannot be seen from the back, they both change and retain their integrity from the sides. For example, from the front, "Snit II" suggests the hieratic immobility of Max Ernst's "King and Queen." From the sides, however, the arabesque line is closer to the movement of Picasso's bulls or Matisse's acrobats. The inventiveness and complexity of these works does not diminish the totemic aspect but strengthens it.

Like Monti, Mary Carlson works in wood, which she may coat with paper and Plexiglas and then paint a single color. Her four wall sculptures are compact and dramatic. They can seem both pressed against the wall like a bracelet and pushing out like a wave, both pinned against the wall like an taxidermist's display and trying to wrestle free like an emerging butterfly in a cocoon. In all four works the vitality and tension are impressive. (Through June 7.)