

Art Reviews

By DAVID PAGEL
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Look Closer: Merijn Bolink is a young Amsterdam-based sculptor who treats objects as if they were words. Making visual riddles out of ordinary things, the eight labor-intensive pieces in his first solo show on the West Coast are the sculptural equivalent of the Heisenberg principle: The more closely you look at them, the less certain you are about what you're seeing.



Post Gallery

Amsterdam sculptor Merijn Bolink's "Portrait of a Portrait."

At Post Gallery, the centerpiece of the show is "Open Door," an old wooden door that Bolink has carefully disassembled, cut into thin strips and reassembled so that the free-standing door "opens" to reveal its widest possible cross-section (cut lengthwise and side to side).

When you think about it, we speak of doors being open or closed only in relation to their surroundings: Without a door frame and at least one wall, it doesn't make sense to describe a door as open or closed, or to differentiate between interior and exterior spaces. But Bolink turns the ordinary world inside out. Folding a door's immediate environment into the object itself, he demonstrates that art does not derive its meaning from its context as much as it acts upon its surroundings, transforming our thoughts about the world in which we live.

Other works play similar games, following the logic of puns to create pleasantly disorienting conundrums. In one, Bolink uses strips of film (from a famous Dutch porno movie) to make a life-size sculpture of a nude woman. In another, a fire hose and a bucket become metaphors for a story about a snake and its prey. And in "Portrait of a Portrait," a small painting by his grandfather serves as the basis for a full-length picture.

Despite the relentless inventiveness that animates all of his works, none escapes the sense of melancholy that pervades the show as a whole. In contrast to similarly recycled sculptures by Luciano Perina and Tim Hawkinson—which are generally giddy about their capacity to remake the world—Bolink's wistful pieces savor the losses that take shape whenever one meaning displaces another.

• *Post Gallery, 1904 E. 7th Place, (213) 622-8580, through Aug. 31. Closed Sunday-Tuesday.*