

## *Peter Reginato: Steel Drawings*

Blocking out forms and redefining them empirically, Peter Reginato fits finely drafted elements developed from an increasingly complex vocabulary of forms into planar intersections of burnished stainless steel. Introducing an aesthetic of seeing things not really there, he incises complex tracteries out of openwork surfaces cut with a hand-held plasma torch fueled by compressed air. The resulting elements are harmoniously bent, fit, welded and finally burnished into a kind of three-dimensional drawing that embodies a beauty and strength inherent to the medium, impervious to the elements and appropriate for installation in the open air.

Thirty years or so ago Reginato began to consider the box as an essential element in primary, structured form. More exoskeleton or shell than armature in its many parts, the larger-than-life *Ghost* (2009) is a recent extension of a series of mound-shaped sculptures, here with a freely defined box described by lengths of stainless rod. Roughly the size of a large suitcase, the box is part illusion, its perimeter a suggestion of fully dimensional volume, the edges defined by thin tubes of burnished steel. The box thrusts into the sculpture's open core beyond an aperture sufficiently large to permit entrance. Slightly torqued like a rhomboid, part of the mystery of the work resides in an upper plane of plastic acrylic with two oval forms cut directly from the sheet. Along one load-bearing, engaged arc Reginato introduces a circular form composed of bent steel rod and fits it with an oval sheet of plastic with a single aperture like a thumbhole in a palette. Viewed in the round with neither back nor front, *Ghost* resonates with forms that resemble tropical leaves and the bunny drawings of the late Ray Johnson. Along one load-bearing section Reginato partially distributes the sculpture's considerable weight through a brief flight of ascending curbs articulated in three adjoining sections.

A burnished box appears in the heart of *Slow Burn* (2008) close in size to *Ghost* but weighted on what appears to be a greater massing of parts. A single, solid horizontal panel opposite the "entrance" to the structure is vigorously ornamented with cut filigrees reminiscent of the interlaced, ornamental elements characteristic of Celtic art and close at hand a spear-shaped form wrapped at a more or less central span and bound with tubes of steel. A grid of welded tubing casually defines one side of the mount while at the apex of the mound a crate-like box of shining wire astride one of several flights of stepped steel. A box within has at its center a single hole, which viewed from within again suggests a painter's palette pierced by a conduit or drain. Joined sections of curb evident along the base of *Ghost* appear along the base.

The two-foot high helmet-like mound of *Juicy Loosie* (2009) rehearses these forms and modifies others—the load-bearing curb, biomorphic shapes, geometries and piercings of acrylic inserts and a complex, scattered tangle of clipped lengths of steel resembling a spill of pasta. A coil springs into space, the form he seeks casual, stuttering, staccato and loose. Here Reginato inserts plastic disks into an angular, linear box that rises up through the sculpture's core complicating a reading of the planes they describe, illusionary. Regarding his sculpture as a kind of drawing, Reginato continues to experiment with sculptural form, a process of discovery of the qualities he seeks in pleasing tension. The work comes to possess a kind of inevitability, a force that seems to bind the sculpture to itself, its own armature set free. At once clear and complex, it is a breakthrough in scope and ambition, a measure of the artist's accomplishment.

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