

# ARTFORUM

## David Keating

KUNSTHAUS BASELSTADT

St. Jakob-Strasse 170

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For his institutional solo debut, David Keating presents a twin pair of sculptures that upon close inspection turn out to be fraternal, not identical. Titled *Endless Nameless I* and *Endless Nameless II*, both 2014—a probable reference to the eponymous, hidden track on Nirvana’s generationally formative album *Nevermind* (1991)—they represent institutional premises in divergent scenarios, one being outdoors and the other inside. The exterior sculpture is solidly anchored to the ground, while the interior work hovers slightly above the floor, presenting a tripping hazard. Both are fashioned from the same materials: black square steel tubing, welded to approximate the cinematic 16:9 ratio and perpendicularly supported by a shorter arm. Two aureate brass rods, casually arranged into a cross, jazz up each combo more than inquisiting it. The frames are the primary structures through which to perceive spatiotemporal surroundings and contingencies that arise. During one recent visit there, I found the structures perfectly “theatrical,” in Michael Fried’s use of the word: The outdoor rectangle, from one side, framed the museum’s entrance and visitors, and (when viewed from its other end) the open trunk of a commercial truck, and its crew performing on-site duties.



View of “David Keating,” 2014.

Minimalism’s success in having found its way from corporate space to middle-income homes goes hand in hand with its fate of being received largely as style. While one of the movement’s initial aims was to challenge an increasingly rarefied modernism and a reifying culture industry, contemporary artists working with Minimalist vernaculars take/resort to deneutralizing their work by injecting it with biographical-historical ingredients, in order to retain the institutional credibility underwriting art-market value. More frequently, they strive to display a fast-moving cultural acuity for materials and textures—the kind of street cred tracked and refined in parallel by high fashion’s ever-quickening cycles. Thus ironically, Keating’s structures—their discretion and ease notwithstanding—may prove to be portals that, once entered, open onto a site for debate.

— Daniel Horn

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