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The New Criterion

October 2009, Gallery chronicle, by James Panero

Several shows this month deserve far more attention than space allows, so here are the best of them, however briefly. When I last reviewed the sculptor Mel Kendrick, another David Nolan artist, I objected to the diminutive scale of the work on view. Kendrick is a constructivist who carves an abstract shape from a wood block, then places the result on top of a base made of the leftover pieces. For an artist who likes to show his hand, sometimes the process gets the better of the product. Not so for a set of monumental sculptures now on view in Madison Square Park. Derived from many of the same forms at his last Nolan show, these outdoor giants executed in poured black-and-white concrete are playful exceptions to the cloying piles that normally pass for public sculpture. To appreciate their power, just visit the park with children around. By climbing through every hole and jumping off every shape of Kendrick's work, they understand the fun of these structures without the need for further explanation.