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## Gordon Hall Gives Platonic Love to a Stool

Blake Gopnik, Thursday, September 18, 2014



Here's a wonderfully and quietly odd piece called "Double (I)", from Gordon Hall's first New York solo, at [Foxy Production](#) gallery. It consists of a stool that the artist found (in Madison, Maine, they let us know) and then a purified, rectified "copy" of that stool. I feel as though I've been presented with several steps on the way to the Platonic ideal. (Plato, of course, talked about a table, but a stool seems a perfectly good stand-in.) The found seat isn't the lowest possible stool in the Platonic hierarchy: For such a scrappy, casual object, it is jointed with unusual care. Then Hall's doubled version takes it up a notch, in a modest if unlikely act of worship. (But is that one green edge on the new lumber preserved by Hall out of respect for the original state of the materials, or out of a kind of slacker disregard for perfection?) "Above" both stools there then hovers the diagram that describes them, then above that the pure geometry that defines its shapes, and then much higher up, on some superlunary plain, is God's ideal of how an X-shaped, Maine-made stool ought to be. (I love the idea of God crowding his mind with such details.)

One other thing Hall's stools call to mind: That great [Saul Steinberg](#) drawing of a hand-sketched cube dreaming of being a ruler-drawn one, and a rigorous one wanting to be wild and woolly. Does Hall's piece depict stool-envy? (Courtesy the artist and Foxy Production, New York; photo by Mark Woods)