

# METRO PICTURES

Heinrich, Will. "What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week," *NYTimes.com* (October 11, 2018).

## The New York Times



B. Wurtz's "Octave," from 2018, made with materials including piano parts, bottle caps and buttons.

In the sculptor B. Wurtz's 2018 piece "Octave," which opens "Domestic Space," a show of his old and new work at Metro Pictures, eight wooden levers ripped out of some unfortunate piano dangle from stiff wires propped inside a bulgy, transparent Harman Kardon speaker. The piece sits not directly on its pedestal but on a small plywood platform, and from every wooden faux flower hangs one black clothes button and one white plastic bottle cap.

It's all a little too much, but the piano parts make it work. Each odd-looking wooden mechanism is itself made up of nearly a dozen separate pieces, not counting conical springs or spongy green cushions, and so the sculptor's own elaborate assemblage is no more complicated or ridiculous than its found components — only more overtly so. It comes across less as a gesture of imaginative whimsy than as a feat of observation.

The same overstuffed delicacy characterizes the show as a whole. Three untitled recent sculptures, five-foot cubic wooden frames draped with socks, plastic shopping bags, and a Home Depot yardstick, though they're an interesting take on what it means to occupy space, may be a little too clever. But eight installations from 1987 are extraordinary: Each starts with a humble object like a cheese grater, colander or found chunk of concrete meander sitting on the floor on another modest little wooden platform. Looming over it on the wall is an enormous, close-up black-and-white photo portrait in the overbearing style of early fascist propaganda.

At first they'd seem to be jokes about photography and its capacity to fictionalize and mislead. But the melodramatic photos look no less real, in their way, than any view you can find with your own eyes, making them much deeper and more unsettling jokes about truth and the nature of perception.