

# WSJ

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Fine Art | By Peter Plagens

## Hiroyuki Hamada

### Lori Bookstein

138 10<sup>th</sup> Ave., (212) 750-0949  
Through Nov. 9

Sometimes it's not good for works of art to remind you of other art, or—in the case of abstract art—to remind you of objects out there in the real world. No artist wants to be seen as unoriginal, and most abstract artists don't like the idea that they might be slipping back into figuration. But in the case of Hiroyuki Hamada, the fact that several sculptures in this refreshing exhibition bring to mind the work of Martin Puryear (and, more distantly, Constantin Brancusi) and, in a few pieces, the forward section of the space shuttle, makes the art register as richer and more complex than mere formalist exercises.



Hiroyuki Hamada, #73, 2011-13, Painted resin, 46 x 70 x 25 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Lori Bookstein Fine Art, New York. Photo: The artist.

Mr. Hamada was born in 1968 in Tokyo but moved to the U.S.—to West Virginia, and it's hard to get more down-home than that—as a teenager. At first, he studied psychology, then switched to art, where he found himself, and then within art, to a painstaking process involving resin, wax, layers of plaster and some finishing touches with paint (those space-shuttle-ish details), where he's obviously completely at home. While Mr. Hamada occasionally fusses with surface graphics a little too much, he confines his forms to one simple volume emerging from another. The exception is the quietly stunning '#73' (2013), a large, white wall work that amply rewards prolonged viewing.

There's not a lot of really cohesive sculpture (broadly defined by me as single objects that can be packed into a crate) around these days, and this austere lyrical show is an excellent example of why it shouldn't be allowed to disappear into the quicksand of installation.

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