

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

Miami

Ohad Meromi

GALLERY DIET

174 NW 23rd Street

November 30–December 31

The title of this densely packed exhibition comes from the first volume of *Das Kapital*, where Marx likens the factory to a stage, and the workers to players. The conflation of pleasure and production that this analogy represents gives form to Ohad Meromi's latest show, where figurative sculptures, titled *Gravediggers*, act out the modernist dream of achieving utopia through the aestheticization of daily life. The factory is the titular work, a large installation of wooden circles and triangles that seemingly float in space—never fastened, just leaned against each other or temporarily held with clamps. Able to be rearranged at will, the shapes are graceful, but their instability toes the edge of collapse. The gallery as a whole is punctuated black wooden partitions. Reading as a theater's curtains, these barriers structure the progression through the exhibition with help from a cordon of *Gravediggers*, anthropological forms that test the limits of representation.

In playful dialogue with Constructivism, the *Gravediggers* show the human form via different configurations of triangles, semicircles, and trapezoids. Meromi also suggests the body with the curves and holes of musical instruments, a nod to Braque and Picasso's Cubist collage, and the exhibition's overall theme of performance. Constructed of stacked elements—wood, concrete, and cast aluminum—they, like the factory, seem very precarious due to the fact that many are held together by no more than the force of gravity. The wood gives them a feeling of prototypes, and the dripping, flawed aluminum recalls industrial waste. In addition to the *Working Day* and the *Gravediggers*, there are several elements that add to the totalizing experience. Props from previous interactive installations are included, and found objects bring in the outside world: the bust of *Grave Digger #12 (Pony Tail)*, 2012, is separated from the base by a stack of cassette tape boxes; American Spirit cigarettes keep reappearing. These elements, which summon the happenstance of the rest of the show, hint toward a total theater, but one that is far from utopian.



Ohad Meromi, *Grave Digger #5*, 2012, wood, aluminum, acrylic paint, concrete, styrofoam, box of yellow American Spirit cigarettes, 84 x 11 x 12".

— Hunter Braithwaite