

Eberhard Bosslet

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Although it might be argued that the opening festivities for Documenta 8 in the early summer of 1987 – the frenzied trans-international art crowds swarming around outdoor cafes and subterranean bars were the most provocative and entertaining aspects of this lackluster blockbuster, a few artistic high points still linger in the memory. One of these notable exceptions was the sculptural installation of West German artist Eberhard Bosslet, whose latest sculptures and paintings were recently on view at the John Gibson Gallery (September 10 October 8). Unlike Bosslet's Documenta project, which functioned simultaneously as a series of interconnected „autonomous“ sculptural units and as a site-specific „intervention“ within the structural/architectural conditions of the museum building, the sculptures at Gibson are emphatically not site-specific. Perhaps as an indirect result of the pressures of the New York context, or for more compelling private aesthetic reasons, we are offered a group of the artist's smaller productions which lack the power of the large-scale installations. These sculptures make reference to the utilitarian and „administrative“ conditions of artistic production by indexing the traces and signs of infrastructural procedure. Each work is primarily fashioned from the disassembled parts of a file cabinet, which are subsequently reorganized into a surrogate base or pedesta – on top of which is placed the surrogate sculptural unit. Although these structural areas are read as a synthetic whole, Bosslet is interested in exposing the rudimentary relationship between „base“ and „superstructure.“ By recycling the file cabinet itself an index of administrative necessity and functionality Bosslet confers a bureaucratic quality which connotes the tautological process of sculpture-making. Although the apparent crudity of Bosslet's small sculptures is attractive, it would seem that the techniques employed to „lay bare“ the infrastructural logic have become so refined so „bureaucratic“ as to produce an overall elegance of resolution. Contradiction and complexity of form is evacuated in favor of a complacent seamlessness and uniformity of style.