

# ARTFORUM

## David Jablonowski

### GALERIE FONS WELTERS

June 2–July 21



View of “user,” 2012.

The German sculptor David Jablonowski is fascinated with objects that carry meaning—in the literal sense of *carry*. His exhibition at Galerie Fons Welters, titled “user,” is laden with projectors, books, prints, television screens, offset plates, and pedestals. Their abundance here gives them a liminal quality. On the one hand, Jablonowski “uses” these objects to display films, texts, or images, but on the other, they are objects of reflection and contemplation in their own right. This indeterminate space of purpose seems to be precisely where Jablonowski’s interests lie—in the modernist tradition, his work plays with the question of how much the information carrier contributes to the content of the message, and whether the two can be distinguished.

The charming thing about Jablonowski’s work is that the art emerging from this abstract theme is anything but austere. He is constantly subjecting language and content to playful transformations. Exotic spices sprinkled onto plaster casts of book spines, and exhibited works of Arabic calligraphy as abstract decorations, all toy with the form and significance of the “pedestal.” One of the highlights of the show is the sculpture series “Volume,” which consists of large rectangular blocks (some ten by five feet in size) with chamfered corners. On first glance, they resemble old pedestals or gravestones—weathered, begrimed, and filthy. This allusion is reinforced by the traces of dried plaster underneath, as if someone had tried to restore the pedestals to their former, pristine state, but failed miserably. Only on closer inspection does it become clear that the blocks are Styrofoam and the weathering is completely artificial. These sculptures are far from being carriers, or media, or means; rather, they are the end product of Jablonowski’s fascinations, and his continual flirtation with the middle ground is what makes the quest so rewarding. Here, the medium truly does become the message.

*Translated from Dutch by David McKay.*

— Hans den Hartog Jager



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