

NEW YORK

Gedi Sibony

Greene Naftali

“The Terrace Theater,” Gedi Sibony’s recent exhibition, offered a performance centering on natural light as it restaged objects and their shadows in relation to each other, the spaces between them, and viewers. As with any show, some viewers left minutes later, unaware that they had flubbed their walk-on role. At least a few lingered and began to see that Sibony’s exhibition asked new questions

as well as old ones. Old questions about mass, form, space, light, time, distance, and meaning are central to his work. By using only natural illumination and large rectangles cut through walls to allow light to pass into central interior spaces, he reminded us how objects make various shadow images and how sunlight (or its absence) affects the size, location, and shape of each shadow. As the press

release explained, “It is the inner space of the advancing visitor that brings the mute structure to life.” This suggests that we as viewers must empty our minds of other concerns and be present in order to explore Sibony’s work. Such concentration, in turn, may open new doors in our bodies and minds.

Sibony’s new questions were raised at the outset. In *Signs of Encounter*, two silver-colored, seeming-

ly empty and identical frames, each mounted on a narrow plinth, faced each other from inches apart. Viewers first saw this work from a distance while entering the gallery’s narrow corridor, which opens on to three entranceways leading to spaces on all sides. Many, I guess, did not notice the different materials of the two frames—one of cast aluminum and one of painted wood—or wonder

THIS PAGE:

GEDI SIBONY

The Point of Its Origin, 2017–20.

Canvas, grommets, wood, steel wire, steel cast iron, copper wire, brass tube, salvaged hollow core door, aluminum brackets, painted masonite, and nylon string, 101 x 173 x 62.5 in. overall.

OPPOSITE,

LEFT TO RIGHT:

The Terrace Theater, 2019–20.

Salvaged wood, paint, metal screws, and casters, 56 x 143 x 338 in. overall.

Signs of Encounter, 2019–20.

Cast aluminum, painted wood, and metal screws, 76.63 x 39.75 x 35.5 in.





which came first and whether one was copied from the other. Paradoxes of illusion versus reality, original versus copy, and truth versus fiction surrounded the central paradox: emptiness. Was the framed space different from the surrounding spaces? A synecdoche broadcasting the themes of the entire show, *Signs of Encounter* addressed many things, including the role that space and the unknown play in our consciousness of things. Across from it, a corner plinth was bare except for a small, curious-looking cup; this, in turn, led the eye into the back gallery, which included a similar, yet empty plinth and a white and gray, empty frame with small geometric objects tucked inside.

To the right of the entrance, a wall of windows in a side gallery cast not-so-square shadows onto a square-tiled floor and onto *The Terrace Theater*—two rows of 1950s-style work stations made from salvaged wood, paint, metal screws, and casters. Some had wheeled feet, and most held similar (but not identical) geometric objects. These desks faced a separate,

half-painted work station, *Determined from Purified Forms*, framed by a velvet curtain (*A Function of Element*) on one side and the canvas-on-canvas *Spatial Phase* on the other. Sibony's theater sprang to life as his spaced objects and their somewhat arch titles came together in a windowed space where his cuts through two walls allowed light to penetrate deep into interior space.

Cases of illusion versus reality abounded. What did Sibony add or erase from the thrift store paintings hung here and there? Why couldn't we enter the innermost chamber except with our eyes? How could we figure out what the symbols meant if we couldn't see them? My thought is that the final inner room represented the artist's studio, showing where the process begins and the ideas develop: *The Point of Its Origin* included a hanging canvas, wood, steel, copper wire, an empty shelf, and a slender hanging stand with an empty, looping wire frame on top. The darkest space seemed to signify the artist's search to discover, uncover, or arrive at physical creation and light.

—JAN GARDEN CASTRO

