CECILIA DE TORRES, LTD.
140 GREENE STREET NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10012
T: 212 431 5869 F: 212 343 0235 E: mail@ceciliadetorres.com
www.ceciliadetorres.com

Karen S. Chambers, "Marta Chilindron, Dimensions, Cecilia de Torres Ltd."

Furniture is obviously one of the biggest challenges facing designers, and the pleasures of a successful piece are both visual and visceral. As an expression of the decorative arts, furniture communicates reams of information about a culture. Whether or not a society sits on a chair, hunkers down on a stool, or lolls on a luxurious pile of rugs reveals much about its stability and aesthetic. Much has been written about the metaphorical richness of furniture, particularly chairs. A throne symbolizes power, the bead of a committee is its chair, the bishop speaks ex cathedra. The fact that contemporary artists have appropriated the traditional forms of furniture in a century when art for art's sake has triumphed says something about the power of the genre. Its forms that we are intimately familiar with can be used to communicate ideas about form as well as concerns that are more conceptual. Scott Burton, Richard Artschwager, Lucas Samaras, and others have made that clear. Marta Chilindron is working in that realm. Chilindron makes sculptures of simplified furniture forms that collapse in space or, perhaps more accurately, collapse space. She extends the forms in space, stretching them vertically, when in reality they should reach back into space. By reducing parts of familiar forms - a straight backed chair or a simple table - to perfect planes, all meticulously painted in ghostly white or shadowy gray, the effect is of abstract sculpture. The work borders on minimalism, but is always a little too complicated for that reading. In her show at Cecilia de Torres, one enters the gallery and confronts UNTITLED 101, 1997, at an angle. The viewer reads it as edge because it is so narrow in relation to its overall dimensions, only 15 inches Jeep as compared to its height of 112 inches and width or length of 132 inches. It has an animal-like presence with a pointed body, or perhaps face, and long skinny legs, a stylization of perhaps a lean thoroughbred horse. Coming around to the left and getting another head-on view, the white forms read as overlapping and staggered rectangles, a handsome abstract composition. But on the other side, its "back," in terms of placement in the gallery, also reads as front as the source of the forms reveals themselves as bookshelves and table. She has taken the familiar and given the viewer more options than a verbal description of the form would initially have suggested. The ideas that Chilindron is exploring are not new to her. The oldest work in the show is from 1985. It is an untitled Wall work that looks like a desk, table, chair, and shelves all compressed at an oblique angle so the shelves slope down and the chair is flattened against the floor. It's all recognizable, a little funny, a little disturbing. A foam-core maquette for an as-yet-unrealized work, Untitled 102, 1997, shows a compressed table and chair. The tabletop is humped up in space, extending vertically when one'expects a form extending back into space. The maquette's scale is unknown, but the sculpture could be of the size to approach architecture, the table legs becoming a form to walk under, not crouch beneath. These small models are meticulously rendered and make clear the games that Chilindron is playing with space and sculptural form and our heads. It's a simple exhibition with a simple idea beautifully expressed. Like all simple ideas, it is elegant and allows for more than one reading. She calls the show "Dimensions," and there are many.

Review, 15 April, 1997