

ARTFORUM

Park McArthur

ESSEX STREET

114 Eldridge St

January 12–February 23

For her second exhibition at this space, Park McArthur has laid out an arrangement of twenty wheelchair ramps on the gallery floor, from the weatherworn and homemade to the high tech and telescoping. Vinyl lettering on the wall points visitors to the URL for the Wikipedia page on disability activist Marta Russell, who wrote extensively on the political economy of ableist prejudice; a copy of Russell's book *Beyond Ramps* (2002) sits on the gallery's office desk.



View of "Ramps," 2014.

McArthur, who uses a wheelchair, has borrowed the ramps from institutions where she has worked as an artist. Each readymade sculpture is titled after what the press release refers to as its "lending organization": *Team*, 2013, comes from Team Gallery; *AVA*, 2012, from Audio Visual Arts; *Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (Medium)*, 2012, from the Skowhegan residency program, and so on. Because many of the ramps were installed specifically for McArthur's use, the artist's gesture goes beyond Duchampian recuperation: These ramps, in a sense, already belonged to her. Each marks her experience in a network of respected institutions while simultaneously belying the heterogeneity of those institutions' resources. Laid bare, these sclerotized products of a highly contingent economy illustrate the melding of public and private property and space that facilitates McArthur's existence as an artist.

McArthur's work also instrumentalizes the patronage of the gallery's clients. While the ramps are on view in the gallery, blue aluminum signs have been posted at McArthur's behest (but also as required by law) at each ramp's original location to explain its absence, functioning like the notices that museums hang when paintings are removed for restoration. Five blank examples are hung, like Yves Klein monochromes, high on the gallery wall. The entire exhibition is considered one work and by purchasing the ramps, a collector is removing each from public use—obtaining ownership over it as an artwork—while also instigating the removal of the sign from the lending institution by replacing it with a new ramp (the replacement cost is included in the price of the artwork). Patronage of the gallery, then, is implicated in a greater reshuffling of subjective experience, institutional access, and the work of art as an object of exchange.

— Ian Wallace