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Park McArthur, “Ramps”

Time Out rating: ★★★★★

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Ramps can be employed to great effect in visual art: Take Vito Acconci’s notorious elevated floor in *Seedbed*, which provided a creepy hideout for the artist’s masturbatory performance, or the skateboard park in L.A. MoCA’s “Art in the Street” exhibition, which gave the show an energetic jolt. The same holds true for Park McArthur’s eclectic collection of loading ramps, used to move stuff back and forth across various thresholds.

Arranged here in an undulating, gridlike configuration, many of these objects are titled after the places from which the artist liberated them, leaving behind a sign pointing to the

next accessible entrance. Such notices are required by law, though few are in evidence on the gallery blocks downtown. With this in mind, perhaps, McArthur has hung a series of blank metal plaques, each a brilliant blue, high on a wall; they resemble minimalist color studies, placed tantalizingly out of reach.

The ramps themselves range from warped wooden planks appropriated from a residential high-rise to a comparatively luxurious ten-foot aluminum folding model that once belonged to the LES work and exhibition space Recess. An arching ramp from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture curves gently like a bridge over a pond. Ironically, the shabbiest examples here come courtesy of Essex Street itself, and include an old cabinet door as well as a piece of cracked chipboard bearing tire marks. Beaten and forlorn, they suggest that inaccessibility, however unintentional, produces a deleterious impact.

—Merrily Kerr

