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## WORK IN PROGRESS



By Andrea K. Scott



Illustration by Matthew Hollister

In May of 1968, Charlotte Posenenske, a thirty-eight-year-old German minimalist with a thriving career, published a manifesto. The first lines read like Donald Judd (“The things I make are variable / as simple as possible / reproducible”); the last was a Dear John to sculpture (“Art can contribute nothing to solving urgent social problems”). With that, Posenenske, who had survived the Holocaust in hiding, threw over art for sociology. Her focus, until she died, in 1985, was assembly-line labor, which comes as no shock in a show of her work from 1967-68 at Artists Space. Materials are industrial (aluminum, steel); forms are modular (fifty square tubes make a double X, a flat-bottomed V, and so on). What’s radical is the choose-your-own-adventure twist on party-line minimalism: collectors (“activists,” to the artist) could configure the objects as they saw fit. You can, too—a pair of hinged sculptures here are intervention-ready. In a summer that’s seen art reduced to a competition on cable TV, Posenenske’s inclusive idealism holds special appeal. ♦