

Artnet
"Metal Mandible Mantis"
Eve Wood
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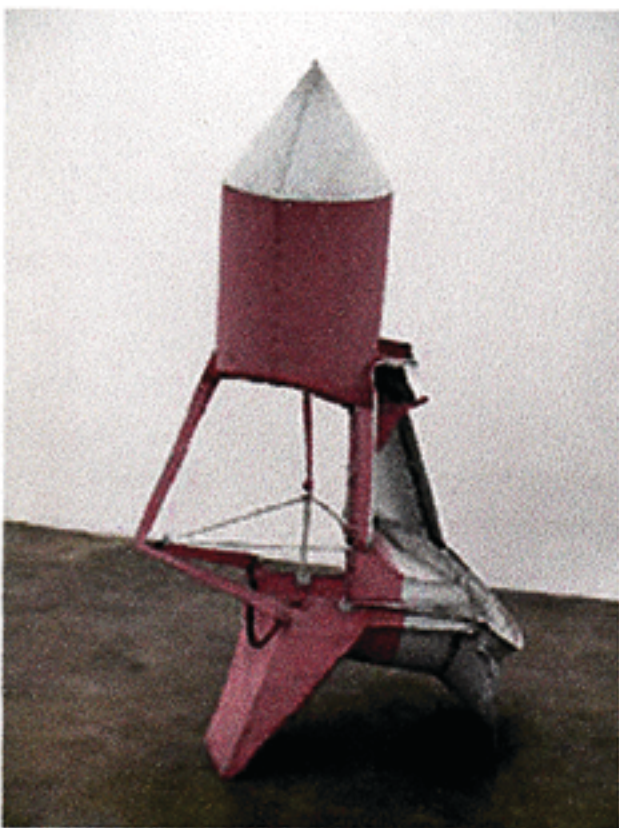
Metal Mandible Mantis by Eve Wood



[Thomas Kiesewetter at Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, installation view](#)

Thomas Kiesewetter, Nov. 20-Dec. 18, 2004, at Roberts & Tilton, 6150 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, Ca. 90048

Since opening in Los Angeles in 2000, the Roberts & Tilton gallery has become highly regarded, in part because directors Bennett and Julie Roberts have adopted an international vision. The newest arrival into the fold is Thomas Kiesewetter, whose large wood and metal sculptures simultaneously embody both the figurative and the conceptual impulse.



[Untitled \(pink/gray\)
2004](#)

The four sculptures presented in this exhibition all display a distinctly modernist esthetic. Made of riveted, welded and folded sheet metal, often given an all-over monochrome coat of paint, the works either perch on the floor or on custom-made sheet-wood plinths. They have an architectural as well as material resonance.

The most striking work in the show is the most anthropomorphic: an elaborate sheet-metal form painted a brilliant fluorescent green whose shape is vaguely reminiscent of a praying mantis. The work is fluid even as it stands static in the middle of the gallery.

Because none of the works are titled, they seem even more iconic. Some have a certain whimsy. In one corner of the gallery, what looks to be an oversized rocket, painted powder pink, might have been made by a child. The piece becomes a depository for unrealized dreams, as it sits poised for the sky, yet sadly grounded.

There is one other large work, definitely the most ominous in the show, painted a deep rich brown, the sculpture resembles a dilapidated house, held up on faith and several spindly wood stakes. The smallest sculpture, painted silver, sits atop a bare wood platform, and is the most obviously "beautiful," with steel gullies, distempered metal fragments and makeshift, cutaway corners.



[Untitled \(brown\)
2004](#)

With all of Kiesewetter's pieces, process is evident, bolts are exposed through the metal frameworks, paint is streaked, corners are sharp, and yet the magic of the work lies in the single fact that each becomes a receptacle for mystery, for secret desires, and the artist's own culpability in allowing his imagination full reign.

EVE WOOD's new book of poetry, *Love's Funeral*, is published by Cherry Grove Collections at the University of Cincinnati.

