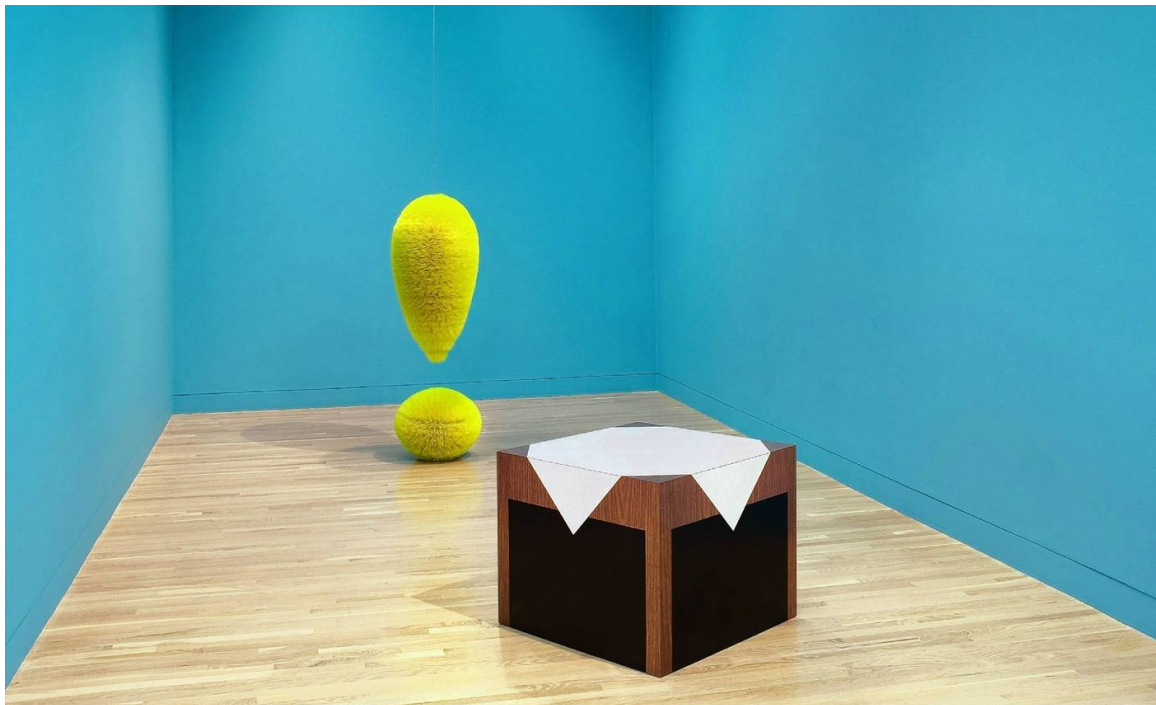


Knight, Christopher. "Review: Richard Artschwager a success in any dimension at Hammer," *The Los Angeles Times*, 15 July 2013.

Los Angeles Times

Review: Richard Artschwager a success in any dimension at Hammer

BY CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT



#8220;Description of a Table" and a suspended exclamation point are installed in the same room at the Hammer Museum. (UCLA Hammer Museum)

Richard Artschwager, who died in February at 89, was that exceedingly rare artist who made paintings and sculptures of virtually equal merit.

In contemporary art, usually it's one or the other. Painters paint, sculptors sculpt, and the differences between them constitute a gulf difficult for one artist to bridge. A few painters, such as Ellsworth Kelly, also manage estimable sculpture. Jeff Koons, to cite perhaps the most prominent current example of a sculptor-who-also-paints, has made

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some terrific sculptures since the 1980s, but every Koons painting I've seen has pretty much been a sad waste of canvas.

Not Artschwager — who, it should be pointed out, almost never used canvas as a support for his paintings, a pertinent fact that we'll explore in a moment. The traveling retrospective now at the [UCLA Hammer Museum](#) features about 145 works that include drawings, prints, photographs and ephemera. Some omissions from the early years and a jumble of late work make the show less than satisfactory. But the eye- and mind-bending paintings and sculptures from 1962 to about 1974 cement his reputation as a major artist shaking up a pivotal era.

A primary reason for Artschwager's unusual success as both a painter and a sculptor is that his paintings are pictures made into objects, while his sculptures are objects made into pictures. The slip and slide between two and three dimensions in both bodies of work keep a viewer on his toes, unsure of exactly what he's looking at.

His best work induces what artist Ed Ruscha has helpfully described as the "Huh? Wow!" sequence of response, rather than the dispiriting "Wow! Huh?" For art, there's nothing better than that.