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Art in America

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"Work Hard:
Selections by Valentin Carron"
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"Work Hard: Selections by Valentin Carron"

at Swiss Institute,
through May 24
18 Wooster Street



Contemporary art that plays with the forms and tropes of high modernism can come off as a wan exercise in decoration. But Valentin Carron's sculpture has always introduced sly incongruities in otherwise stately modern monuments, and "Work Hard," the group show he has organized, expands on his idiosyncratic vision with an eclectic selection of off-modern works. There's a suite of Surrealist drawings from 1919 and some mid-century eccentricities: a kinetic wall piece by Jean Tinguely, and a 1967 chair with a neon back and legs. The more recent inclusions détourn the visual vocabularies of postwar art. In *Lost in Confusion*, Sylvain Croci-Tori spills white on a blue monochrome's edge with messy frivolity, while in Claudia Comte's *Lapin Africain 5* (both works 2014) large wooden rabbit ears rest on a rail that zigzags out of the wall. The Swiss Institute's gallery has been painted a silvery gray that doesn't reflect the works but captures the glow of their colors. It's a neutral, totalizing background that doesn't isolate as white walls do, but rather lets the art leak beyond itself—a spatial analogue, perhaps, to Carron's free handling of history.