

NEAR ZERO

Near Zero pairs together two generations of complex reductivity. Russell Maltz (b. 1952, Brooklyn, NY) and Peter Demos (b. 1981, Wheatridge, CO) are known for their unwavering dedication to sparse aesthetics and a restrained use of materials. They have a near-zero approach to making, employing few variables, resulting in work that is visually minimal and austere. Each artist is concerned with figure-ground relationships, perception, and balance. However, as pleasing and harmonious as these works first appear to be, they are unnerving at their core through perceptual sleight of hand. Their work requires patience, time, and attention to fully reveal their expert nuance of form and surface.

For over four decades, artist Russell Maltz has explored reductive abstraction through his use of found and painted industrial materials and their relationship to space and place. His materials are those that might be encountered on a construction site: industrial-grade glass plates and off-cuts of wood, blinding DayGlo paint straight from the can, all suspended from galvanized metal nails. Maltz's needles are brutally straightforward. There is no attempt to hide the humble materials, but rather to transcend them. The verticality of his long, delicate needle works, some of which are eight feet tall and some as thin as 1.5 inches wide, enforce gravity, pulling the eye to the floor of the gallery, piercing through space. This assertive gesture, however, is simultaneously tempered by the tension of the pieces as they hover in the air, floating from the wall just above the floor, casting quiet shadows throughout the gallery. The over-saturated fluorescent hues applied to these works are arresting, allowing these slender pieces to hold vast open walls.

Demos' large horizontal canvases rely on carefully constructed compositions consisting of borders, pseudo-rectangular shapes, and a horizon line in the center of the canvas that places us on unlevel ground. A triad of matte acrylic colors are applied by hand in hardedge shapes of black, white, and fluorescent magenta on dyed or raw unprimed canvases that appear as a fourth desaturated hue. Demos' paintings are disguised as quiet. At first glance they pretend to have little to offer, but slowly reveal deftly orchestrated subtle tweaks and mischievous tricks. Perfect rectangles become wonky and trapezoidal, and the absolute horizontality of a border or horizon becomes torqued and bent. The expansive space of the raw canvas shifts from being a mere surface to a shape plunged far inside the picture plane.

Like holding one's breath, both artists' works exist in a state of tension and suspended time. In a culture where we are increasingly relying on fast-paced, image-based communication that disseminates information all at once, it's refreshing to confront works that refute this economy of time and easy readability. There is minimal visual information in the works of these two artists, but a wealth of things to experience.

Shawn Powell

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Biography, Russell Maltz (b. 1952, Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York)

Lives and works, New York, NY

Russell Maltz has been exhibiting work for over four decades and has participated in over 70 group exhibitions. Selected solo exhibitions include Galerie Michael Sturm (Stuttgart, Germany), Galerie Wenger (Zurich, Switzerland), Alejandra von Hartz Gallery (Miami, FL), Galleri Weinberger (Copenhagen, Denmark), The Atlanta Contemporary Art Center (Atlanta, GA), Galerie Schlegl (Zurich, Germany), the Ringling School of Art and Design (Sarasota, FL), the Museo de los Pintores Oaxaqueños Oaxaca, Mexico), as well as numerous exhibitions at Minus Space (New York, NY) where he is represented. In 2004, Maltz exhibited in Cleveland, Ohio at the Gund Building of the Cleveland Institute of Art's then construction site as part of his work *Five States, Five Sites+1* with the Reinberber Gallery (Cleveland, OH). His work is included in numerous public and private collections such as The Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, NY), Yale University Art Gallery (New Haven, CT), Fogg Art Museum (Cambridge, MA), Museum Moderner Kunst (Ottendorf, Germany), and the Gallery of Western Australia (Perth, Australia). He has been included in the following publications: The New York Times, Artforum, Art in America, Hyperallergic, Delicious Line, The Wall Street Journal, Miami Rail, and the Village Voice among others, and serves on the Advisory Board of Critical Practices Inc.

Biography, Peter Demos (b. 1981, Wheatridge, Colorado)

Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

Peter Demos received a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, Missouri and an MFA from Hunter College, New York, New York, where he was the recipient of the Tony Smith Award. He has been awarded residencies from the Urban Culture Project in Kansas City (2004 - 2005), with The Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation (2011-2012), and at CCA Andratx in Mallorca, Spain (2015), that concluded with an exhibition featuring the works produced over the course of the program. Demos has exhibited in numerous group exhibitions including, Deitch Projects (New York, NY), Dorsch Gallery (Miami, FL), The Hole (New York, NY), Leo Koenig (New York, NY), Martin Asbæk Gallery (Copenhagen, DK), and Venus over Manhattan (New York, NY). He has had solo exhibitions with David Richard Gallery, the Journal Gallery, and RH Contemporary Art. Demos' work is included in multiple private and public collections. He has been included in the following publications: The Last Magazine, Dossier Journal, The Huffington Post, The New York Times, Refinery 29 and New American Paintings.

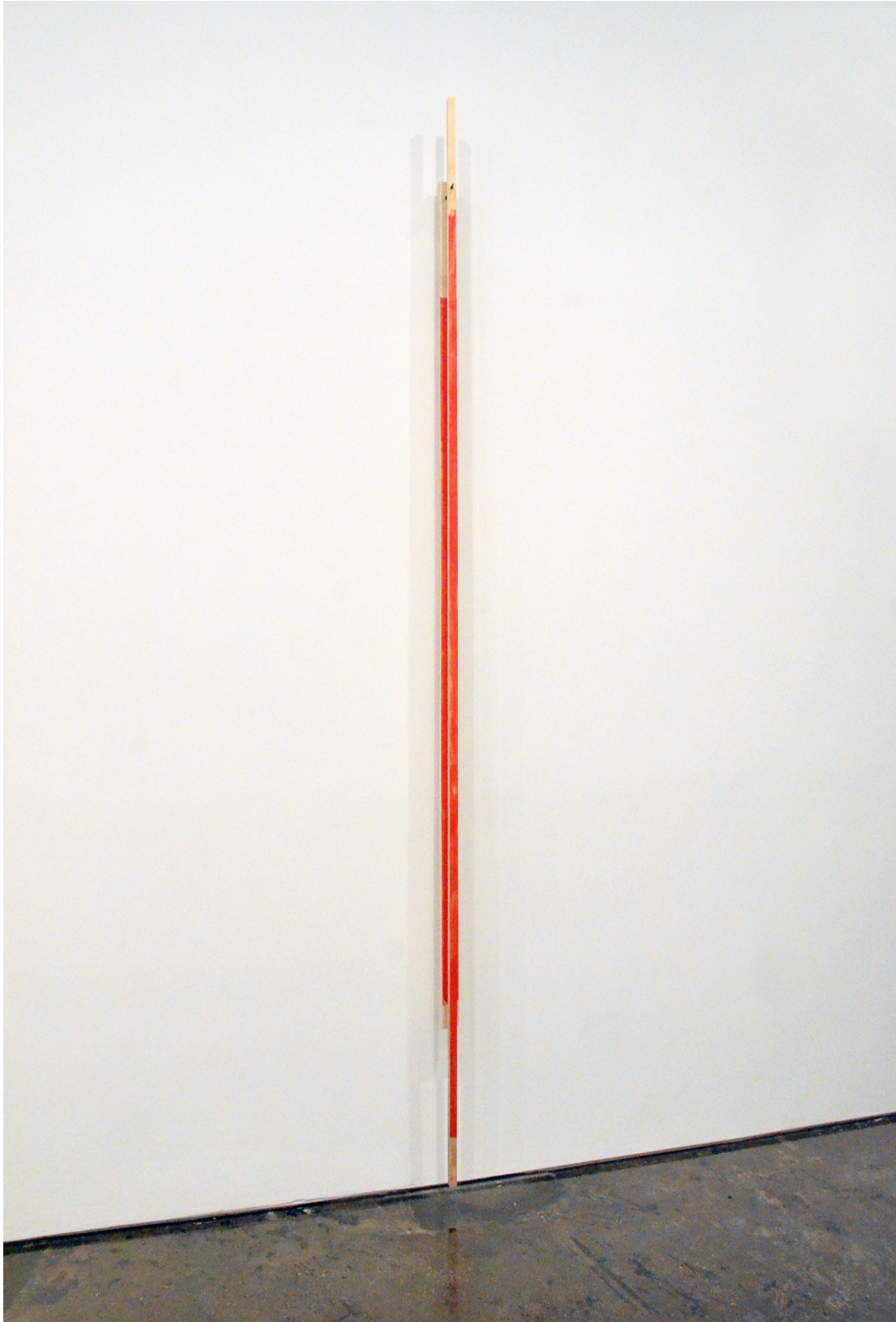
NEARZERO



Russell Maltz, *Green Riser*, 2018

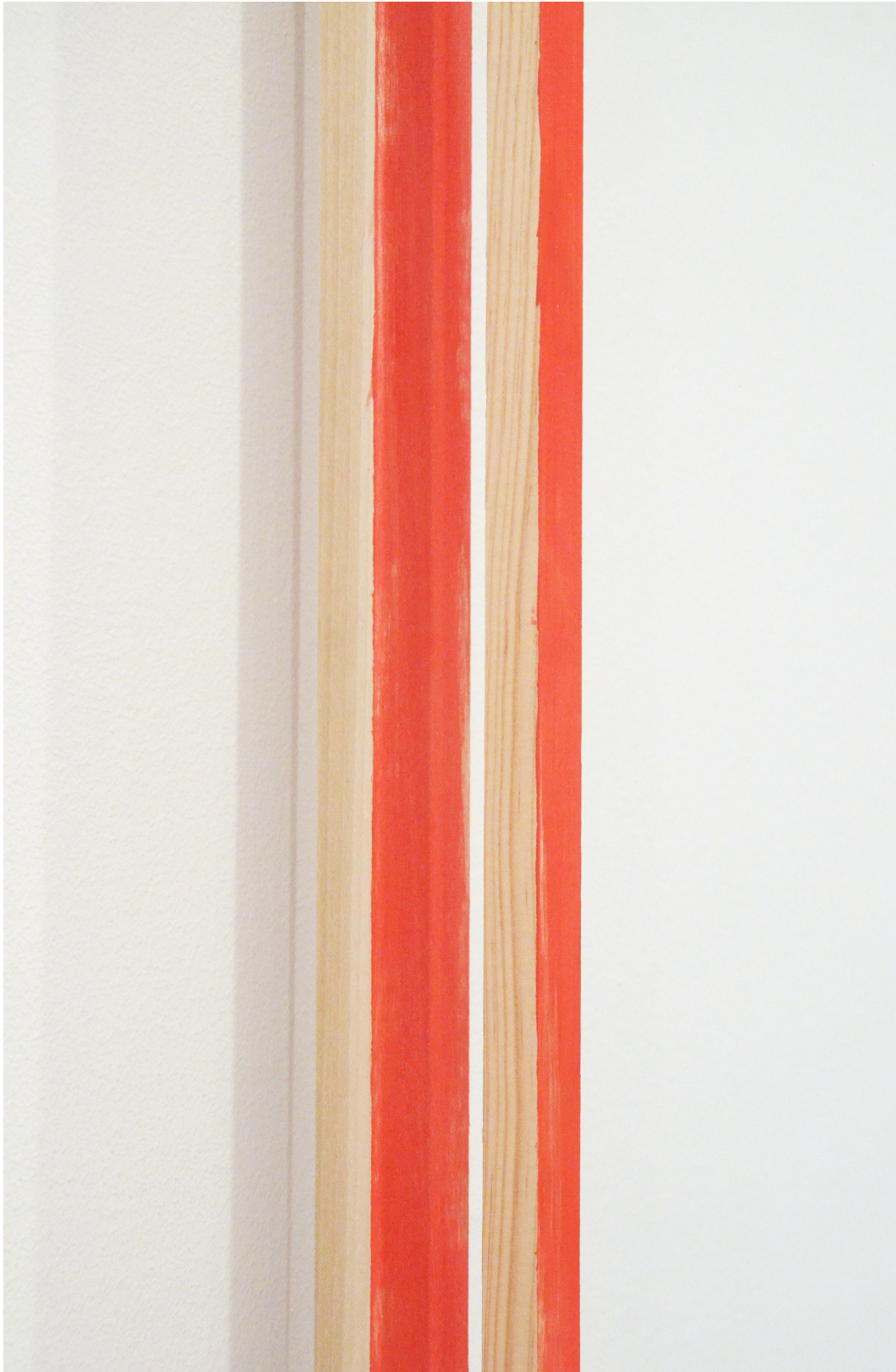
Acrylic and Polyurethane on Glass (3 plates) suspended from a galvanized nail
96 x 3.5 x 4 in. (243.85 x 8.90 x 10 cm)

NEARZERO



Russell Maltz, *S.P. / R #117*, 2017
Acrylic and polyurethane on wood, 2 pieces,
96 x 1.5 x 7 inches / 244 x 4 x 18 cm, #RM53

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Russell Maltz, *S.P. / R #117* (Detail)

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Russell Maltz, *S.P./GW*, 2018

Acrylic and Polyurethane on wire glass, plate glass and wood suspended from a galvanized nail
96 x 2 x 4 in. (243.84 x 2.54 x 10.16 cm)

NEARZERO



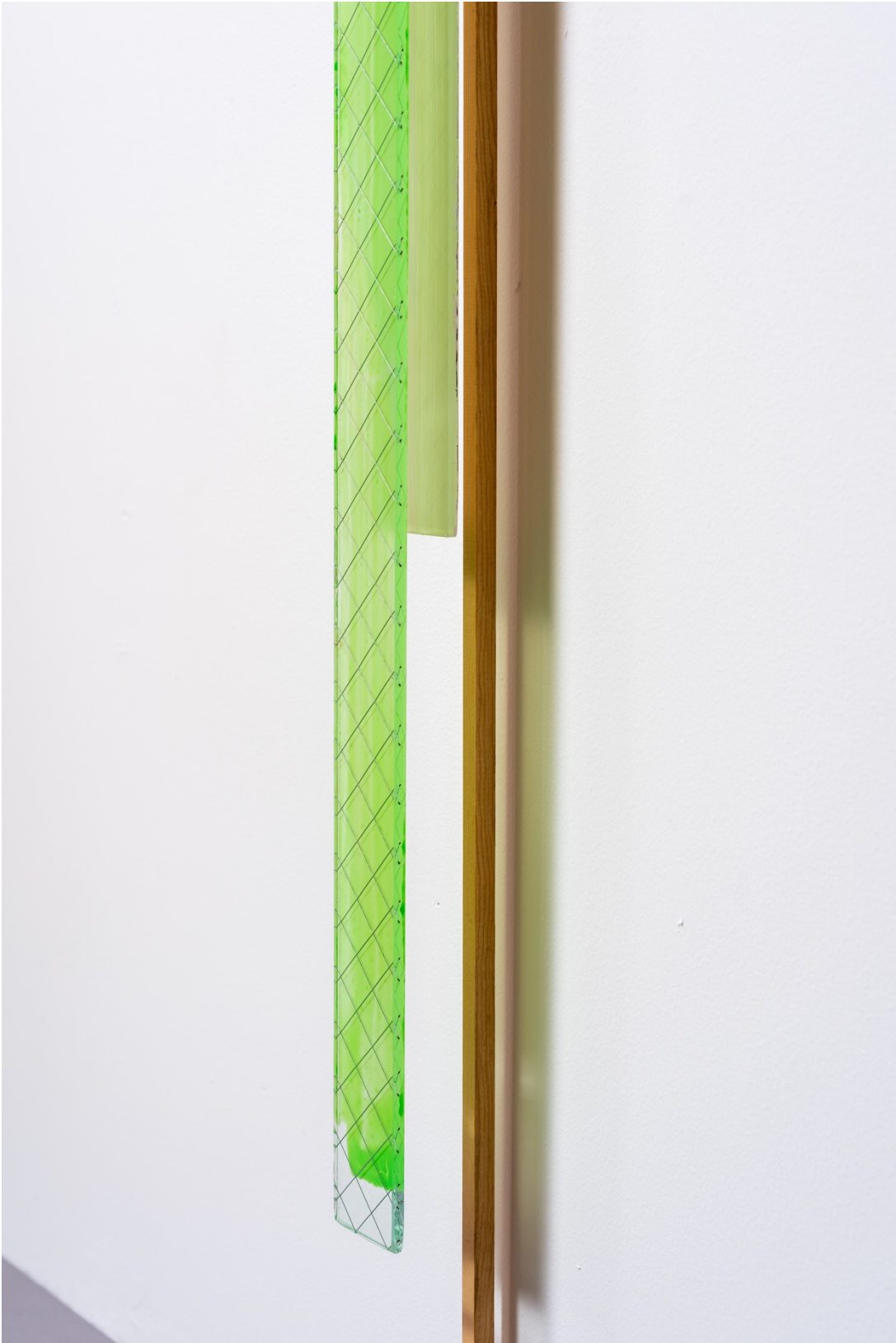
Russell Maltz, *S.P./GW* (Detail)

NEARZERO



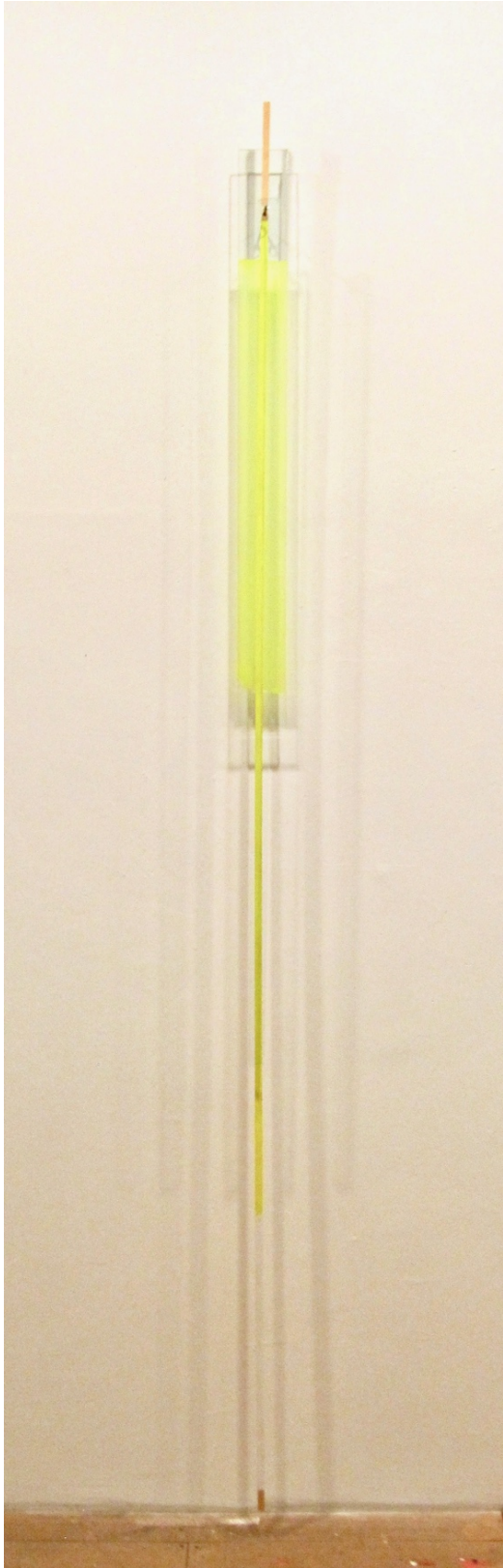
Russell Maltz, *S.P./GW* (Detail)

NEARZERO



Russell Maltz, *S.P./ GW* (Detail)

NEARZERO



Russell Maltz, *Yellow Riser*, 2018
Acrylic and Enamel on Glass and Wood
96 x 3.25 x 4 in. (243.84 x 8.26 x 10.16 cm)

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Russell Maltz, *ACCU FLO*
Acrylic on Wood (3 plates) suspended from a galvanized nail.
75 x 2 x 4 in.

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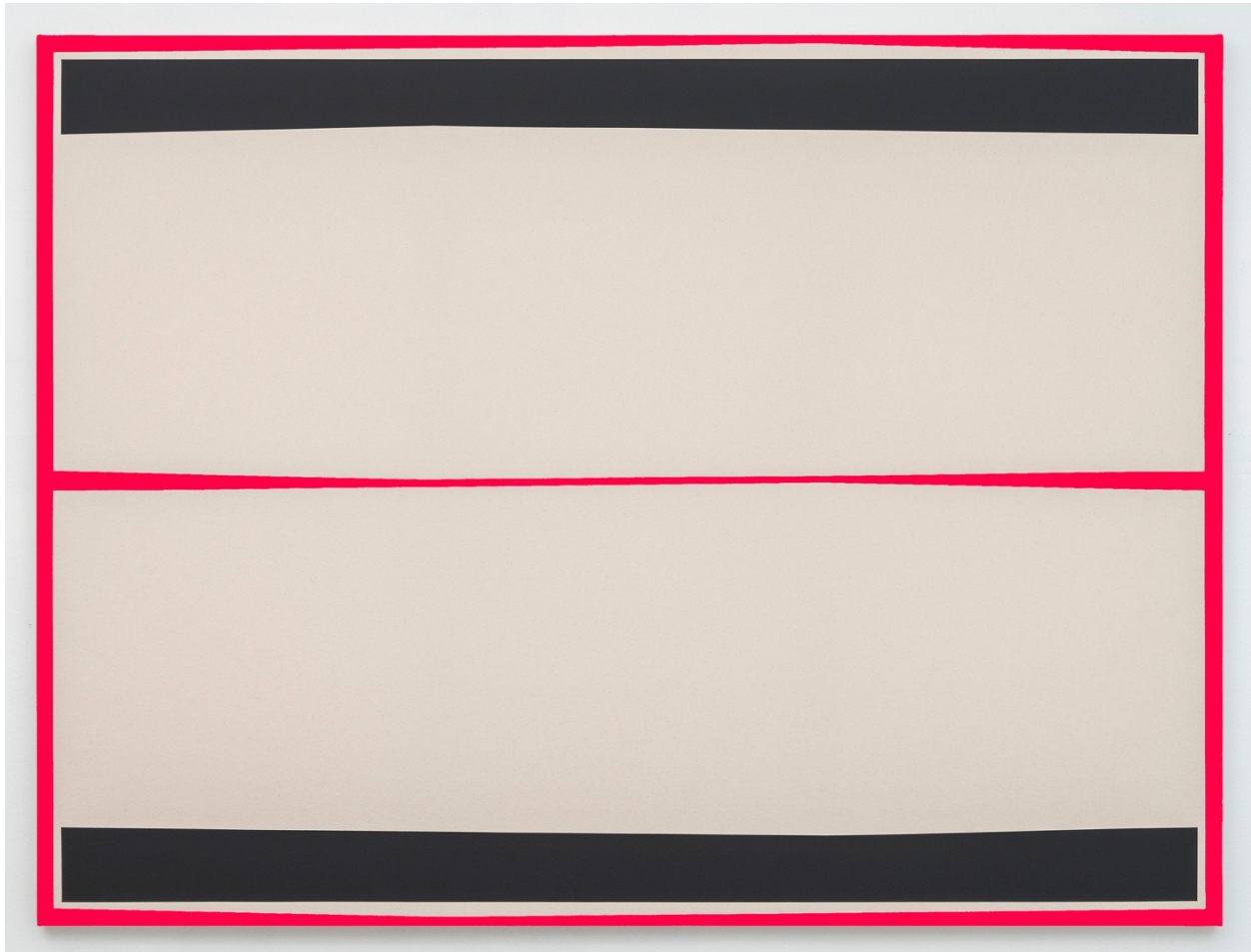
Russell Maltz, *ACCU FLO* (Side view)

NEARZERO



Peter Demos, Untitled, 2022
Matte acrylic on raw canvas
54 x 72 inches

NEARZERO



Peter Demos, Untitled, 2022 (in production)
Matte acrylic on raw canvas
54 x 72 inches

NEARZERO



Peter Demos, Untitled, 2022 (in production)

Matte acrylic on raw canvas

54 x 72 inches

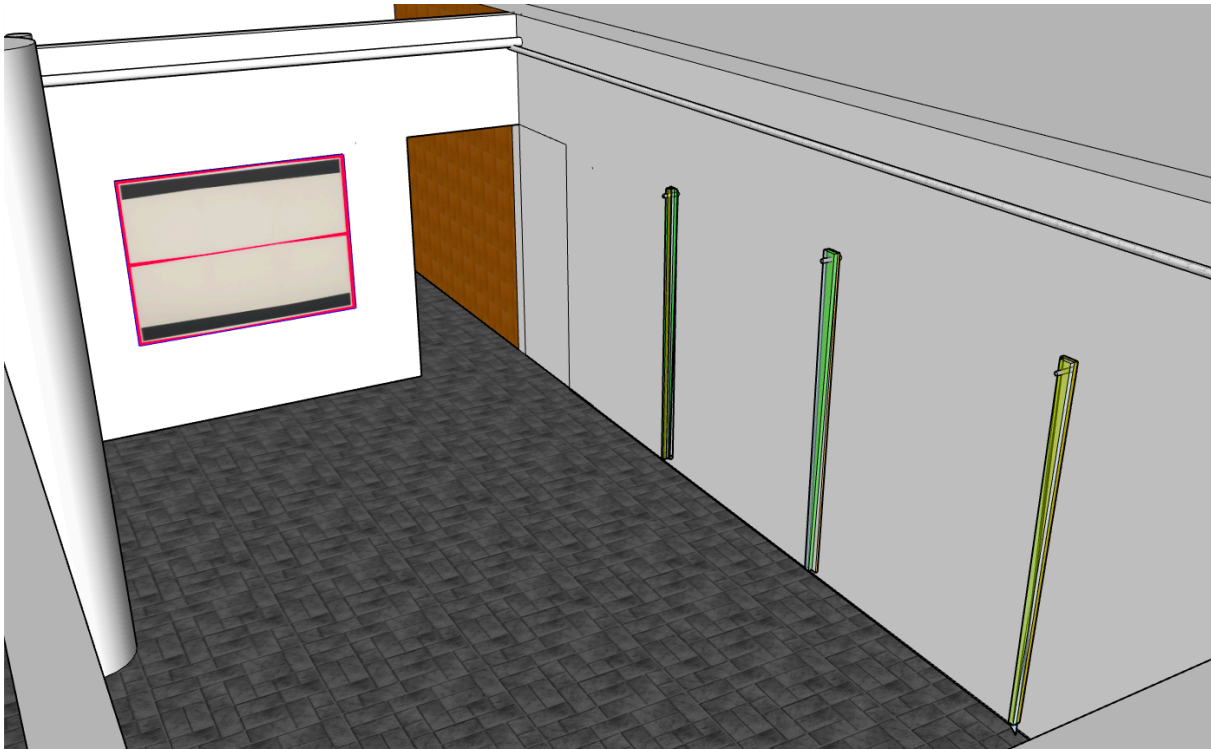
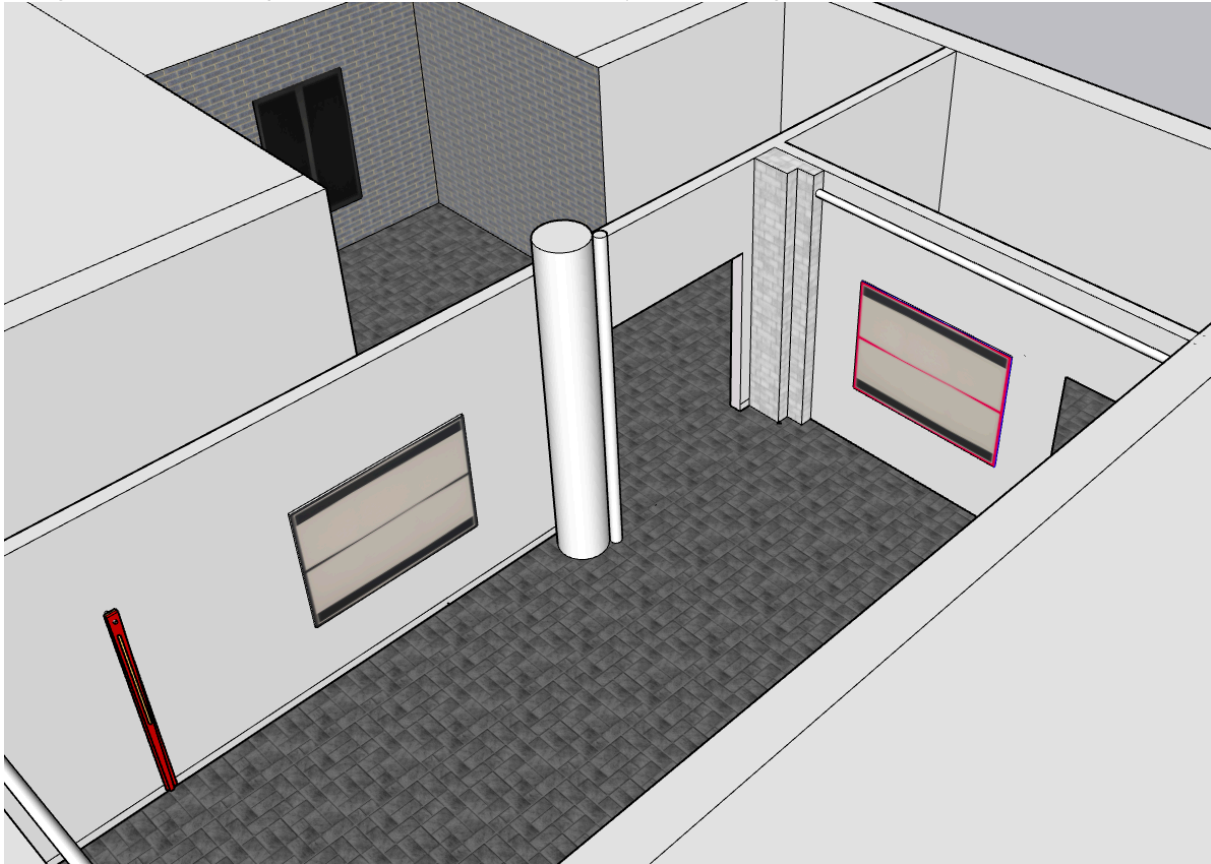
NEARZERO



Peter Demos, Untitled, 2019 (or similar work in production)
Matte acrylic on dyed canvas
72 x 48 inches

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Rough Sketchup images of Exhibition Format (subject to change):



NEARZERO

