

SEAN KELLY

“Danger and Elegance Converge in New Sculptures by José Dávila,” *Artsy*, November 2, 2015.



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Installation view of “A line is written on every corner” at Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen. Courtesy Galleri Nicolai Wallner and the artist.

It’s difficult not to be seduced by the skillful use of gravity in the dramatically precarious conceptual sculptures of Jose Dávila. Yet the Mexican artist also masterfully embraces the principles of minimalism, employing clear, simple forms and materials to great effect. His new works, featured in his current solo show, “A line is written on every corner” at Galleri Nicolai Wallner, are no exception.

With a background in architecture, Dávila creates sculptures that take on principles of design and physics as much as they do art history. Concrete pedestals, sleek slices of marble, smooth stones, and ratchet straps convene in delicate balancing acts that highlight the tension between weight and gravity. Breaking down assumptions about materials and art forms, he uses unconventional materials like another artist might use paint or clay. The bold bands holding the pieces together run along the materials like thick, graphic brushstrokes, making a case for the virtue of one striking line.

The components of Dávila’s constructions are in constant conflict with each other, and yet harmonious. For all their quiet grace, they maintain a wonderful sense of danger. And herein lies, perhaps, the artist’s greatest strength. His new marble works, for example, are composed of thin-yet-massive slabs of gorgeous stone held at an angle from the wall with a single strap. They threaten to fall and shatter on the floor below.

In a work titled *Joint Effort* (2015), two crisp blocks of concrete sit atop one another, bisected by an oblong stone. A red strap locks the three pieces into place, creating a seeming impossible balance and a highly visceral precariousness.

Another work titled *Joint Effort* (2015), a signature work from the artist’s ongoing series, consists of a sheet of glass, two concrete blocks, and two small stones, all secured by a black strap in delicate triangular balance. It looks as though the slightest intervention would lead to destruction—and the viewer can’t help but imagine this dramatic demise.

“A line is written on every corner” is on view at Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Oct. 9–Dec. 12, 2015.

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Jose Dávila
Untitled (African Red), 2015
Galleri Nicolai Wallner



Jose Dávila
Untitled (Calacatta), 2015
Galleri Nicolai Wallner



Jose Dávila
Untitled (Calacatta), 2015
Galleri Nicolai Wallner



Jose Dávila
Untitled (Statuarietto), 2015
Galleri Nicolai Wallner