

MILAN

Andrea Sala

MONICA DE CARDENAS

Via Francesco Vigano 4

April 1–May 10

Andrea Sala's work is apparently simple but conceptually complex. For most of the works in this exhibition, he has reinterpreted modern buildings and design objects, using the same materials as the original project. By reducing their size, changing their functions, and decontextualizing them, however, Sala imbues the pieces with new significance. Here he claims inspiration from Chancey, the protagonist of the film *Being There* (1979), a gardener who encounters the real world only after the death of his employer. Having lived until then in complete isolation in his employer's mansion, Chancey, who is ingenuous and clumsy, is thrown into an environment that he finds overwhelming. He looks at the world in wonderment, inviting us to do the same, but—lacking the proper means to interpret—he cannot fully comprehend what he sees. Sala places the viewer in a similar position; his objects present themselves as "wonders" to be observed with new eyes but also as signs with a history asking to be interpreted. *Palme da Oscar* (Oscar's Palms; all works 2008), for example, is a treelike form that refers to the cement ribs of Oscar Niemeyer's architecture, while the marble pieces of *Fiorito* (Flowering) are like miniature versions of Angelo Mangiarotti's tabletops that have sprouted colored areas. Geometric modules of works by artists Carl Andre and Luciano Fabro are the foundations of *Finestra* (Window) and *Appendiabiti* (Clothes Hanger), respectively, but Sala has multiplied and juxtaposed them to form new objects. The artist manipulates items from visual culture that relate specifically to utopian history and that express certain desires for democratic modernization. He changes their appearance less to debunk them than to renew their meaning, which is why Sala's works seem to have a playful aspect that lies beneath their minimalist cool, as if waiting in ambush.



Anonimo Brasileiro
(Anonymous Brazilian),
2008, rosewood,
dimensions variable.

—Alessandra Pioselli