

# Art in America

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## David Casini

ZÜRICH,  
at Plutschow & Felchlin

by Aoife Rosenmeyer

View of David  
Casini's exhibition  
"Light, measured.  
One soon gets used  
to it," 2014; at  
Plutschow & Felchlin.



Italian artist David Casini's first exhibition with Plutschow & Felchlin, "Light, measured. One soon gets used to it," used the gallery's sunlight-flooded central space to showcase eight small glass vitrines, within which organic objects met man-made materials in spare, airy arrangements. Each case is unique, but they all stand on slim, brass-limbed bases and have bottoms containing a *pietra dura* pattern in marble from the Arno River in Tuscany. Inside of one such case, from the 2013 series "Momento in cui tutto questo ha un spazio" (A time when all of this has a place), is part of a small, barbed fruit with two curling tails. It has been sliced, and its flat edge brightly painted and adhered to a side of the glass, where the fruit looks potentially still alive.

Other arrangements are more complex, such as a 2014 piece from the series "Le pause sono brevi ed eterne" (The pauses are brief and eternal). Here, nine colored plexiglass disks are organized in a grid, suspended and tilted within a metal frame. The grid hangs above a small, pale gourd placed in a ridged metal cuff. In spite of the more modern materials like plexiglass, the works on view created the ambience of a private museum in a gentleman scientist's study. The (often baffling) diversity of their contents and precise methods of display all hark back to times when the sciences were not so dryly compartmentalized and collection and curiosity were the basis of discovery, not to mention when art and science were not separate domains.

Casini (b. 1973) has previously presented drawings, paintings and more elaborate installations. This relatively restrained show played on ideas about categorization and history. If the brass tubing echoed the work of Italian sculptor Fausto Melotti (1901-1986), a large plaster cast of the head of Michelangelo's *David*—standing nearly 5 feet tall directly on brass legs—recalled not only the Renaissance virtuoso but an Arte Povera master of the same name, Michelangelo Pistoletto, who often refers to canonical artworks in his installations (the "Venus of the Rags" series, for instance). A large lump of coral clings to two of the four legs supporting the head.

Annexed in a wing off the main gallery were four bell jars from the 2011-12 series "Il ritorno dell'illogica abitudine" (The return of the illogical habit). Within each jar is a small architectural model made of artificial resin resting on chunks of coral. The series re-creates ill-advised and sometimes illegal Mediterranean coastal buildings from the last 50 years or so, including hotels and private dwellings that look like follies. While it might be possible to criticize the works in the main gallery as being simply curios, that judgment does not apply to the bell-jar pieces. They address a real world of danger and demand attentive, if uneasy, viewing.