

# ARTNEWS

ARTISTS — NEWS

## Step into a New Phase: Eleven Madison Park Makes Art Part of a Fabled Restaurant Setting

BY *Katherine McMabon and Andy Battaglia* POSTED 10/10/17 9:00 AM



*EMP Step*, 2017, cast stainless steel, 192 x 15 x 4.5 inches, by Daniel Turner at Eleven Madison Park.

Eleven Madison Park, a vaunted restaurant in a vaulted space in the Flatiron District in New York, has reopened to much fanfare after four months off for renovation and reimagination. Chef Daniel Humm is back in the kitchen he made a focus of global attention among gourmands, and diners are back in front of the kind of artful and sophisticated dishes he has made a specialty.

Upon entry, guests at Eleven Madison Park will now pass over a sort of threshold below: an artwork conceived for the luxe environs by the artist Daniel Turner. The piece is a Minimalist sculpture on the floor that doubles as a step up to the dining room, made of old materials from the restaurant's former kitchen that were melted down and transfigured into a new form.

The work is titled *EMP Step*. To learn more about its genesis and the journey to its new home, *ARTnews* spoke to both the artist and the chef about the project—and photographed it beginning this

summer, while it was in the fabrication phase, and through its final installation last week. Interviews with Turner and Humm follow below, with a photo slideshow beneath.

*As told to Andy Battaglia:*

## Daniel Turner, artist

Daniel Humm heard of my piece *Particle Process Cafeteria* at König Galerie in 2016. Through a deconstructive process, I dissolved components of a cafeteria—folding chairs, collapsible tables, pieces of steel and wood—that were reduced to particle form. They were chemically modified and sprayed across the expanse of the gallery. Basically it was the reduction of an environment. I had been looking at environments, particularly constrained environments—cafeterias, waiting rooms, doctor’s offices—and had been working on trying to condense them. Rather than pull from environments and produce readymades, I thought, Why not just take an entire environment and reduce it?

Daniel has been in a kitchen his entire life and I happened to have just dissolved one, so there was a similar interest there. I was introduced to him through Ivan Wirth, at a dinner at the NoMad [another restaurant run by Humm]. He said, “I would love to commission a piece for the restaurant. If you have any ideas, let me know.”

From the beginning, the idea was there and he was ecstatic. When the renovation began, I was given access to the entire kitchen. I went through and selected thousands of objects, from forks and knives to 13-foot-long stainless-steel stoves and sinks. All of that was excavated and moved to my studio, where I archived it through photography and drawings. Then it was cut down into small pieces, with a plasma cutter, and melted down into a step. It was melted at Polich Tallix Fine Art Foundry at about 3,200 degrees and recast into a new form.

The finished piece is close to the original proposal except for a few inches. The reason is I had no idea that, when you make a step, you have to comply with city codes. I had never made a step before in the public realm.

A step is a quiet gesture—a classical form with a conceptual relevance. In the context of a restaurant, I felt it was important for me to produce a work that served a utilitarian purpose. The objects had been the backbone of Eleven Madison Park, and I wanted to create a work that honored those materials in a formal, non-decorative way.

## Daniel Humm, chef

We have napkins and tablecloths and works on paper by Paul McCarthy, Roni Horn, Matthew Day Jackson, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Nate Lowman, Rashid Johnson, Norman Foster, Helmut Lang—a lot of people. It happened organically, and when it started I thought I should keep them all. There’s a tradition at places like

Colombe d'Or, the Paris Bar in Berlin, and the Kronenhalle in Zurich—where I'm from—for which the walls of the restaurants have artworks by the artists who eat there.

I've been always interested in Minimalist artists. The process of taking things away excites me more than the process of adding. Many works have inspired me but one of them is a study by Picasso called *Bull*, where he tried to figure out the most important lines of a bull. I learned about that piece maybe 20 years ago and it really inspired me. Then works by Fontana, the slashed canvases, were important to me—and so many more.

I've followed Daniel Turner's work since he took that cafeteria and dissolved it and made into a sculpture that you can walk on. It had a presence and a story and this energy. I was blown away. For me, there is no other room I've ever spent more time in than my old kitchen. There is no place more significant to my work. I spent 12 years in that kitchen and my food evolved there. I'm obviously excited about the new kitchen, but it was very emotional to break the old one down and move on. It was important to me, as it is in my work, to pay respect to the past and make the past a part of the present and the future.

Artists like Richard Serra and Walter De Maria are amazing, but I feel like, with this sculpture, Daniel is taking it to another level where the material is something—not just material. I feel very aligned with that kind of thinking, and it started the narrative for the other new art in the restaurant. Olympia Scarry did a work called *11/11*, which is two sets of eleven windows of stained and painted glass above the entrance. She was inspired by some stained glass in the restaurant before—that was facing west-to-east, and the idea for the new work is to change direction, so now it's north-to-south.

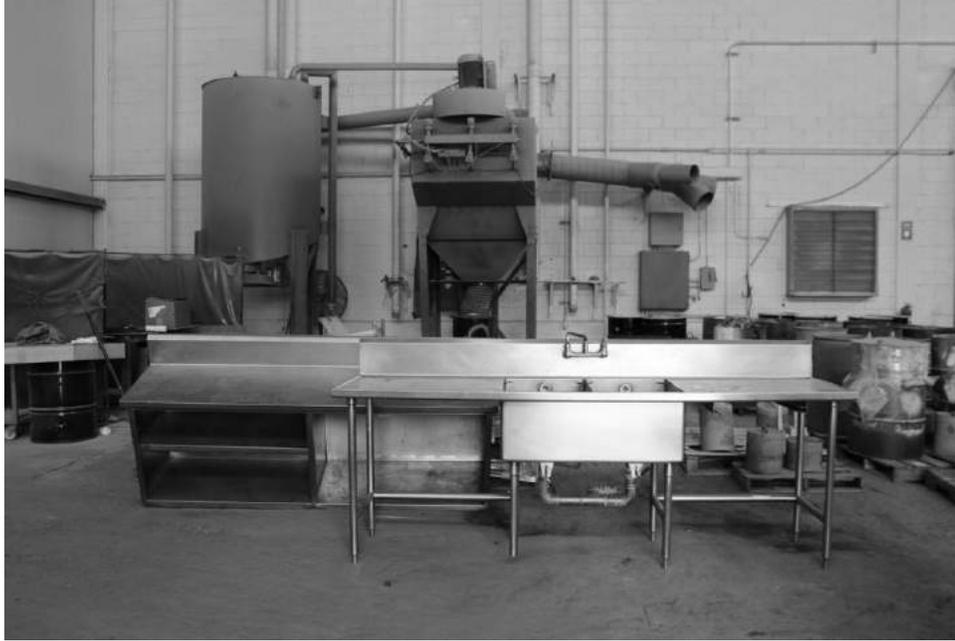
Then Rita Ackermann did a chalkboard painting. I went to a Rudolf Steiner school, and chalkboards have a significant role in the method of teaching there. There was a site-specific painting of Madison Square Park in the restaurant before, by Stephen Hannock. The idea was always to bring the park into the restaurant as much as we can. Rita redrew that painting in her own way—and then erased it and made it abstract. She was erasing to make a new beginning.

The last one happened organically: I'm friends with Sofia LeWitt, the daughter of Sol LeWitt. We had dinner and, when I told her what was going on with the art, she said, "My dad would love to be part of this." In 2005, when Madison Square Park got renovated and then started a public art program, Sol LeWitt was the first artist to work in the park. Actually, the grass in front of the restaurant is called the Sol LeWitt Lawn. So we have our private dining rooms now with Sol LeWitt wall drawings overlooking the park—and the lawn.

Also, in the bar area, we are going to start showcasing some of the works that are done on the spot, by artists who eat with us or send us work or make one on the spot. This is something that will evolve and grow . . .

franklin parrasch gallery, inc.

53 east 64<sup>th</sup> st. new york, ny 10065  
www.franklinparrasch.com  
t 212 246 5360 f 646 429 8770



franklin parrasch gallery, inc.

53 east 64<sup>th</sup> st. new york, ny 10065  
www.franklinparrasch.com  
t 212 246 5360 f 646 429 8770



franklin parrasch gallery, inc.

53 east 64<sup>th</sup> st. new york, ny 10065  
www.franklinparrasch.com  
t 212 246 5360 f 646 429 8770



franklin parrasch gallery, inc.

53 east 64<sup>th</sup> st. new york, ny 10065  
www.franklinparrasch.com  
t 212 246 5360 f 646 429 8770



Copyright 2017, Art Media ARTNEWS, LLC. All rights reserved.