

DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

527 West 29th Street New York NY 10001

Tel 212-925-6190 Fax 212-334-9139

info@davidnolangallery.com

www.davidnolangallery.com

WALL STREET JOURNAL

November 12, 2011

Richard Artschwager

David Nolan Gallery, 527 W. 29th St., (212) 925-6190

Through Dec. 3

Richard Artschwager (b. 1923) is one of the last living American artists to have served in World War II. He studied with pioneer modernist Amédée Ozenfant in Paris. All through this oddball grizzled veteran's body of work, varied in form but consistent in tone, he's remained against the grain. It's a lot easier to say you like Mr. Artschwager's grudgingly figurative, defiantly homely paintings and sculptures than it is to actually do so. (He paints a plank of wood with a cartoonish wood grain, for instance.) Liking them, however, has its rewards—such as prying open your jaws of taste just a little bit further than you're used to.

Nolan's main room is occupied in part by several pastel drawings in basic landscape configuration—a road leading in perspective toward an across-the-page horizon, which is topped by a narrow layer of sky. Technique: antimastery mastery. Color: foggily intense. Mood: red-state melancholy. Unsolved mystery: In one picture, a giant leg sprouts from the ground.

On the far wall hangs "Roofline," a big painting on Mr. Artschwager's preferred rough surface of celotex, a fiberboard material used in residential construction. It depicts a pitched plane of brick-red roofing tiles and a pinkish furrowed field (or maybe a weird sunset cloud formation). Separating them on a diagonal is a purplish rain gutter. I don't know what it means. But the work has been semipleasantly bothering me ever since I walked out of the gallery.

-Peter Plagens