

ARTFORUM

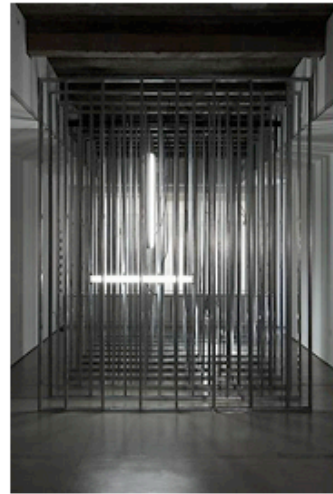
Matthew McCaslin

GERING & LOPEZ
730 Fifth Avenue
April 23–June 6

In *Bite the Bullet* and *I'm Late* (all works 2009), the two sculpturally embellished photographs that bookend this exhibition, Matthew McCaslin fixes his gaze on the stars but does so with a distinctly earthbound humor that might have appealed to *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* author Douglas Adams. Both shots depict pink-tinged nebulae swirling in the depths of space but leaven their subject's extraterrestrial grandeur with, respectively, gobbets of orange-pink chewing gum (arranged in a neat grid) and several embedded pairs of functioning clock hands. The droll pairings are typical of Brooklyn-based McCaslin's wry sensibility and fit neatly into a show that buzzes with energy both elemental and man-made.

In fact, the photos are the only works here that don't actually emit light. *Electric Life Drawing* incorporates not only a mesmerizing slo-mo video of lightning strikes but also a bank of ultraviolet tubes, bathing the viewer in a doubly eerie glow. *David Smith* and the paired *He or She* and *She or He* also get playful mileage from the sculptural qualities of electric fixtures and fittings, recasting sockets, bulbs, and conduits as elements of a formal language that hovers between the organic and the mechanical, the familiarly utilitarian and the utterly abstract. Ironically, the show's only slight misstep is also its physical centerpiece. *Inside Out*, a room-size cage of aluminum studs illuminated from within by four white fluorescents, lacks the concision that McCaslin achieves elsewhere. But while the artist's architectural sensibility is arguably underdeveloped, he remains a consummate electrician.

— Michael Wilson



Matthew McCaslin, *Inside Out*, 2009, aluminum studs, fluorescent-light fixtures, fluorescent bulbs, electric hardware, 12 x 10 x 20'.