

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Ken Johnson, "Art in Review: Miroslaw Balka," *The New York Times*,  
March 1, 2013, p. C27.

## Art in Review

### Miroslaw Balka

'The Order of Things'

*Gladstone*  
530 West 21st Street, Chelsea  
Through March 30

After passing by the reception desk, you come to a small door, which admits you to a big room occupied solely by Miroslaw Balka's "Order of Things," which resembles a giant industrial device. The room is filled with the roaring sound of black liquid gushing

out of hoses suspended from ceiling joists, each dumping its oil-like contents into one of a pair of four-sided containers made of rusty steel plate and shaped like inverted, truncated pyramids.

On the floor in front of these imposing constructions a blocky stool made of layered lengths of floor boards invites you to have a seat. From this low vantage point, the front walls of the containers loom and tilt toward you ominously, as if they might lean further and spill the awful stuff inside all over you. But if you close your eyes, you can imagine that the roaring sound is coming from a great waterfall. There you are, then, between the industrial and the natural sublime.

This rousingly portentous sculpture by Mr. Balka, a Polish artist with an impressive résumé of international exhibitions, could be taken as a piece of mute, neo-Minimalist absurdity. But its title refers to a book by the French philosopher Michel Foucault, so you know that big ideas are afoot, and you must get your implements of interpretive analysis out of your art-viewing toolbox. It is probably an allegory of the mindlessly self-perpetuating machinery driving modern civilization. Or something like that.

KEN JOHNSON