



Art and about: Daniel Rothbart at Flow Chart Foundation

by John Isaacs



Daniel Rothbart: Plus fugitif que la lumière, The Flow Chart Space, Hudson, NY, June 2025.

I've been a subscriber to *ArtForum*, the art world's premier publication in this country, since 2001, or maybe earlier. Every monthly issue is stacked neatly in my studio. They give me a sense of what's going on in the art world that I myself inhabit, publicizing exhibitions and designing and producing catalogues and books.

For the past four months, I resisted looking at recent issues, and they just sit there on a desk, unwrapped from their polythene envelopes, because I've become bored with reading about more and more so-called art.

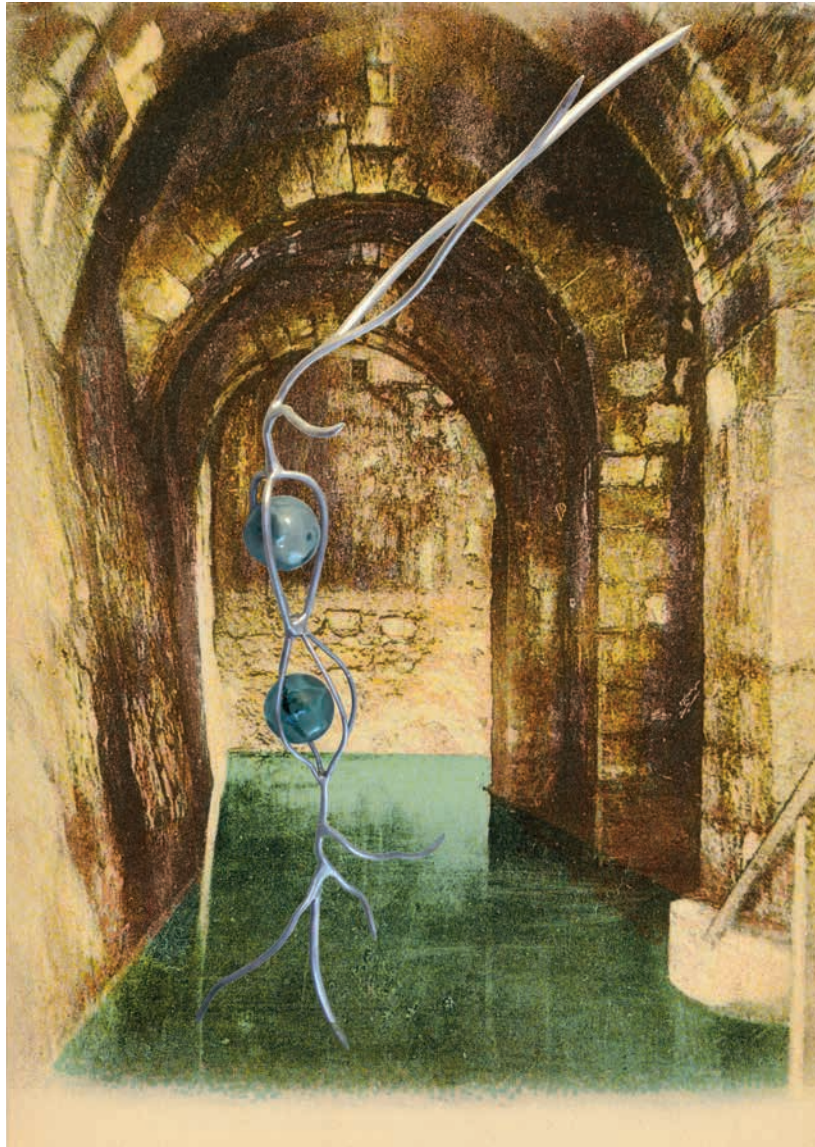
I finally overcame any temptation to reject the whole scene yesterday evening in order to attend the opening of Daniel Rothbart's modest but impressive retrospective at the Flow Chart Foundation on Warren Street in Hudson. Rothbart's been a buddy of mine for quite a few years, and I've long been an admirer of his work as both an artist and a writer. He shows, all over the world, his fascinating surreal assemblages, many floating in water.

The Flow Chart Foundation was established in memory of John Ashbery, the eminent poet and our Hudson neighbor, a truly worthwhile venture since he was so eloquent a cultural observer.

Rothbart's work deserves such exposure. His work transcends categories in its obliqueness.

It mainly comprises beautifully constructed, mysterious metallic structures, quite but not extraordinarily large, that are unique, and which get the mind wandering between exactitude and possibility, a kind of liminal state that simply makes you wonder about the physicality of our world, and whether it actually exists or is a collective dream.

His proposals, whether structural or illustrative are suggestive and provocative in the way of Magritte: taunting, ridiculous, bizarre, captivating, real testaments that address the mystery of reality.



Daniel Rothbart, *Subterraneans*, 1907-2021, giclée print, 24 x 17 inches.

Art is not a commodity; it's a compulsion, which Rothbart exemplifies admirably. Tomorrow, I'll unwrap those wrappers and see what else is going on. It's all part of the power and glory of human enterprise, though I wish it were not so elitist. But Daniel, to his great credit (keep track of his occasional floating sculptures at Oakdale Pond), manages to make it essential.

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