

Gemma Tipton, *Artforum*, 27 July 2012

ARTFORUM

Maggie Madden

THE LAB

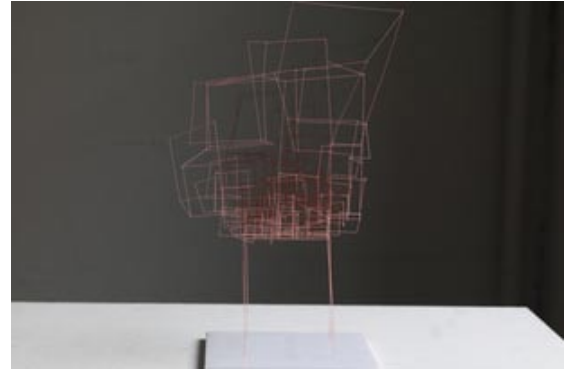
Foley Street, Dublin City Council Arts Office

May 18–July 28

Featuring mass-produced and discarded materials (rubber strips and laminate samples) as well as organic specimens (such as sea kelp and *Sisymbrium orientale*, a flowering plant from the mustard family), Maggie Madden's latest exhibition juxtaposes delicate elements from the natural world with weighty materials from industrial culture.

This combination demonstrates surprising similarities between the two sources of media. In *City to Country, 2012*, a cardboard and plywood construction evokes an architect's model of a skyscraper. The structure sits near a form made from the dried fronds of the mustard plant, and on close inspection one notices that both are made up of connected forms, with repeating shapes and structures - yet one is gridlike and the other is organic and arboreal.

Madden's examination of spatial aesthetics recalls Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's use of natural metaphors to express mapping as a way of making connections. *Expansion, 2011-12*, for instance, is rhizomatic: Here pink and brown fiber-optic strands are joined in sequence to draw squares and rectangles in space. "Growing" from four fibre-optic stems on a tiny foam board plinth, the systems and networks that form the substance of the piece create a density of colour where they mass at the centre, before becoming sparser at the edges. There is a haphazard sense of order to the piece, implying that the systems that underlie everything from communications networks to transportation to social structure are precarious, yet have their own internal logic.



Maggie Madden, *Expansion*, 2011-12, fibre-optic cable, glue, foam board, 12 x 8 x 8"

- Gemma Tipton