

# ANAT EBGI

Christina Catherine Martinez, “Critics’ Pick: An Te Liu,” *ArtForum*, June 23, 2017.

## ARTFORUM

### An Te Liu

ANAT EBGI  
2660 S La Cienega Blvd.  
June 9–July 15

On the cusp of Y2K—the calendar data bug that marked our inauspicious slump into the current millennium—satirical newspaper the *Onion* published an article describing the Vatican’s storage problems resulting from an aging, mentally compromised Pope John Paul II “just blessing everything in sight,” which required the construction of a giant reliquary to warehouse the arbitrarily holy trash. In his exhibition here, An Te Liu carves and casts elegant hunks of ceramic and bronze into modernist-looking abstractions whose enduring materials seem at odds with the disposability of the forms on which he draws.

Domestic objects and Styrofoam packaging are amalgamated into chic sculptures with varied allusions. Cast in bronze and looking battered, a disco ball becomes a Death Star (*The Party’s Over*, 2017) while an anonymous packing block takes on the cinematic gravitas of an ancient alien talisman (*Sentinel [III]*, 2016). The resemblance of *Gnomon*, 2014–2017, to a 1918 version of Brancusi’s *Endless Column* is perhaps the wryest riposte to faith in an essential truth of materials. The skewed symmetry of Liu’s modular parts suggests impending collapse, lending the affect of the cold metal shapes an odd vulnerability.

Set upon plinths, platforms, and beveled recesses on one side of the gallery, the installation perfectly mimics the theater of archeological museum display. The dais is recast as a stage (which you are welcome to walk upon if you remove your shoes), and the works pulse with clownish, deadpan brilliance. At the dawn of the next millennium (if our species makes it that far) landfills may reveal more about how we lived and what we valued than the holy trash of museums.



View of “An Te Liu: Transmission,” 2017.

— Christina Catherine Martinez

All rights reserved. artforum.com is a registered trademark of Artforum International Magazine, New York, NY