

THEARTMINION

Pontus Willfors: Homeland at Edward Cella Art & Architecture

If you're lucky, once in a blue moon, you'll stumble across the work of an artist that is so stupendous in its virtuosity that your mouth may gape. Yes, the look is a dumb one, but no one will be looking at you – they, too, are sure to be transfixed by the wonder before them.

Pontus Willfors, a Swedish artist living and working in Los Angeles, has ushered in a paradigm shift of what I understood to be capable of wood. In *Homeland*, his current exhibition at [Ed Cella Art & Architecture](#) in Culver City, he has manipulated the medium in such a way that simply astounds me; it's as if he is working with a malleable medium like clay. I've never seen anything like this technique before, and indeed, **it must be seen to be believed...**



In *Homeland*, Willfors analyzes the concept of one's home; how it shapes us and is often a reflection of our psyches. He turns the concept of a home as a safe haven on its head, exploring the idea that sometimes one's shelter can become a frightening, inescapable cage.





Willfors has taken commonplace domestic objects and re-created them in his unique twist of intricately cut wood and barbed wire. A crib is outfitted with barbed wire rather than safety slats, a mop's coarse strings are replaced with the same menacing material, and a curtain pulled to the side of the gallery is wholly made from the wire with clusters of short, sharp spikes. Willfors' choice to use barbed wire, often used in warfare for obstruction, leaves no room for doubt – all is not as it should be in his *Homeland*; there is a darker side to the story here.



But, there are two works, *Chair* and *Table with Four Chairs*, that simply steal the show. *Chair* is lifted from the ground by undulating, spindly wooden branches and roots that reach out like fingers in a visual cacophony. *Chair* appears to defy gravity, the

weight of this sculpture inexplicably resting on the delicate wooden roots growing from the feet of the chair. It's as if this *Chair* has finally had enough of being sat on and is taking matters into its own hands...



In *Table with Four Chairs*, Willfors takes the same innovative, sinuous technique even further. The feet of four wooden chairs, turned upside down onto a dining table *a la* a restaurant at closing time, stretch into the sky and twist around one another to create the illusion of a massive, leafless canopy. The “branches” here are much larger, stronger, overarching, and overwhelming.

Incidentally, *Table with Four Chairs* has already been snatched up by a cultural institution, so any dreams we might have of owning this impressive artwork must die. Still, the memory of Pontus Willfors’ exhibition will be seared in my mind for years to come; an artist whose works I hope one day to call my own.

[Pontus Willfors’ *Homeland* is on view at Ed Cella Art & Architecture through July 25, 2015.](#)