

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Sculpture Magazine
December 2000

Mise-en-scène: New L.A. Sculpture

by Colette Chattopadhyay

Tinseltown, home of American cinematic productions, is of unequivocal significance to the six young Los Angeles sculptors profiled in "Mise-en-scène." From the get-go, there is no mistaking the derivation of these works, which study the crafting of illusions and the staging of narratives implicit to art, stage, and movie presentations. These are glimpses behind the scenes of mythical Hollywood productions, presented in sculptures made of found theatrical props gleaned from such locales as the entertainment industry's Burbank supply houses and Hollywood back lots. Light and humorous in tone, the works of Liz Craft, Evan Holloway, Jason Meadows, Jeff Ono, Paul Sietsema, and Torbjorn Vejvi give Duchamp's assisted readymades a savvy, postmodern media spin. While eminently approachable, these works consider such philosophical concerns as Structuralism's interest in the rhetoric of illusion, Lacan's quandaries over the subjectivity of visual references, and Derrida's discussions of the elusive nature of images. While underscoring the artifice of representation, these artists seem to casually suggest with a wink and a smirk that Hollywood has been ahead of this game for more than a century. One of the wittiest works in the show is Craft's huge 14-foot sculpture, whimsically named Bulletproof Snake. Twisting with fantastic knots and curves like the old python Kaa from Disney's Jungle Book, Craft's creature metamorphoses from a coiled serpent base to a striped candy cane to a black furry panther's tail, to bulging pink intestines, eventually culminating in the bicephalous forms of a green spade leaf and a swan-like finger. Playing variations on a theme, this work explores the mutability of line in three-dimensional form. Its exaggerated inversions, reversals, and turn-about parody the shifts endemic to the production of images, be they in Hollywood or elsewhere. Vejvi's Untitled box plays games with illusion in a way that recalls Magritte. A simple cubic form, pierced through from one side to the other, this work profiles established methods of artistically evoking space. The exterior features two-dimensional illusions of receding space, while an internal tunnel amusingly channels viewers from one side of the sculpture to the other. Light but poignant, this work explores both the constructed nature of artistic spatial allusions and of the viewer's artist-assigned vantage point. Meadows's Polydistortion Unit emphasizes the reflective, mirrored nature of images, underscoring the subjectivity of perception and interpretation. Constructed of mirrored surfaces that reflect the inquiring faces of viewers, an overhead skylight, sunlight, and the ceilings and walls, this work returns to

2021 S WABASH AVE
CHICAGO IL 60616
+1 (312) 226 2223

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Duchamp's remarks concerning the singular importance of context in the assessment of images. Rather than trying to escape the imprimatur of Los Angeles, these artists embrace its distinctiveness as a perceived world center of media-propagated images. Both miming and subverting that mystique, their sculptures play with artistic process as though it were *mise en scène*.

2021 S WABASH AVE
CHICAGO IL 60616
+1 (312) 226 2223