

work is much more than a mirror of the mind. Rorschach (*Endless Column I*) is long and narrow, and when seen from a distance, the linear arrangement of silver spoon, candleholder, platter, and tureen resembles glistening drops of water. Parker clearly intends each piece to function as a material abstraction, reviving the notion of authenticity against the deadening sea of objects that litters nearly every space across the world. In an effort to break past the psychological numbness created by this dense volume of commodities, she uses found objects to create nonfigurative forms that momentarily draw viewers' attention away from the objects themselves.

Parker's work transgresses academic boundaries and inverts psychology's use of the Rorschach to investigate and classify personality. Her flat, destroyed objects prevent viewers from making literal associations with the real. One could say that Parker's attempt to use art as a form of anthropological critique risks losing itself to irony. However, the vast amount of space within each installation clearly shows how far these pieces stand from the fast-paced circuitry of market exchange, offering a perspective on a contemporary wasteland that bears comparison with that evoked by T.S. Eliot.

—Jill Conner

## NEW YORK

### Evan Penny

#### Sperone Westwater

Arguably the most memorable exhibition of last fall, Evan Penny's "No-One In Particular" was distinctive for works that offer less an extreme realism than an alternative reality. Penny's bust sculptures appear life-like despite their distorted presentations. Some are portraits, and others, as the show's title suggested, are ciphers made up in Penny's imagination but with particularities that make them appear as individuals. All are super-scaled, but the

strangest common deformation compacts the robust-looking figures into a few inches of relief. In some works, Penny further warps the planes to force some eye-popping perspectives. He runs the risk of seeming gimmicky, but, beyond the spectacle, these sculptures are conceptually compelling.

Overtly distorted works such as *Madriheiro #1* (2005) could be misunderstood as "automatic" computer manifestations, since their images seem taken directly from skewed and scalings made in Photoshop or 3ds Max. For this reason, Penny's works fit our digital zeitgeist—the difficult-to-realize anamorphoses and planar distortions that have been understood for centuries are now push-button available and have entered the common visual lexicon. In three dimensions, the deformations are infinitely more complex because (as Mark B.N. Hansen points out in *New Philosophy for New Media*) the depth hinders resolution of two-dimensional distortions. The forced axonometric view in the male nude *Aerial #1* (2005) characterizes our time and is derived from popular video games such as *The Sims*, eBoy graphics, or the video surveillance of ubiquitous wall-mounted cameras.

While Penny uses imaging software, most of the work involves hand-carving clay, rubber casting, and "painting" many pigmented silicone layers. Finishing touches include cast eyes, implanted hairs, and custom-made clothing. These hand-crafted works that evoke the photographic and digital are paradoxical but offer a fitting allegory for human perceptions and expectations informed by photographic optics and digital alterations. It is appropriate that Penny recently worked in the film industry making special effects props and prostheses designed to look "correct" for the cinematic camera that has become a substitute for human vision.



Left: Evan Penny, *Aerial #1*, 2005. Silicone, pigment, hair, and aluminum, 106 x 60 x 13 in. Right: Evan Penny, *Madriheiro #1*, 2005. Silicone, pigment, hair, fabric, and aluminum, 96 x 15 x 5 in.

Penny drives the photographic point home in *L. Faux CMYK* (2001–05), a spectacle in which the haptic succumbs to an optical phenomenon—the familiar misregistration of the four-color process. Making physical realizations of the blurred and multiply exposed image, Penny evokes Man Ray's tripled *La Marquise Casati* (1922) and Warhol's doubled silkscreens. In all of Penny's works, the references to painted photorealism can't be missed—the over-sizing, exacting details, and the subjects' objectified, mug-shot expressions are evocative of Chuck Close portraits and Howard Kanovitz cutouts.

With each Penny work, the mind struggles to adjust to the distortions. Looking away results in a disturbing split-second phenomenon in which reality seems as skewed as the artworks themselves. Renaissance illusionism followed Protagoras's dic-

tum—man as the measure of all things—as perspectives, even extreme anamorphoses, were situated for the human viewer. By jolting our sense of "real" space, "No-One In Particular" illustrates and intensifies a (mis)perception defining our visual age—that the machine perspective of photography, video, film, and their digital cousins has a primacy over the human.

—William V. Gans

## NEW YORK

### Swoon

#### Deitch Projects

The Swoon opening was remarkable for a huge punk crowd that spilled into the streets and for an action-packed show that was simultaneously flat and three-dimensional. The art ranged from bridges and installations to cut-out, drawn, and woodcut images variously inspired