

Bonnie Collura

Lehmann Maupin, New York, 2000

The massive sculptural groups by Bonnie Collura, create a dialectic interaction with the space around them: their asymmetrical structures full of architectural appendages that move out from the nucleus towards the exterior—the artist has many times mentioned Baroque sculpture, in particular Bernini, as a precious source of inspiration. Her complex and intricate works have perfectly smooth and polished surfaces which conceal the hard work and type of process that went into making them. In fact, the sculptures seem to have been made by adding on heterogeneous elements molded in play-doh, rather than by sculpting out the shapes from an original mass of foam rubber covered by paper and water putty and colored with several layers of paint. The plasticity of the forms, achieved by sharp contrasts between some brightly illuminated parts and some shadowy niches, as well as the prospective placement with a rising point, confers an extremely dramatic tone to the work. You are taken by surprise and the tension vanishes when, studying the details, you realize that the sculptures represent imaginary people—or just parts of their anatomy, like an arm, nose, ear, hand or tail. These are figures drawn from the history of art, fairy tales, Greek myths, and the films of Walt Disney, all woven into a space-time context that is completely foreign to



Bonnie Collura, *Chain Reaction*, 1999, fiberglass resin and paint, 167.6 x 345.4 x 193 cm

them, like an end-of-the-century work of Pop Surrealism. *Chain Reaction* (1999) is a crucible of bushes, faces and limbs, in a constant state of becoming. It's an explicit reference to Bonnie Collura's affection for Baroque masterpieces—such as Bernini's *Estasi di Santa Teresa* (The Ecstasy of St. Theresa)—and for the typical grotesque taste of that era. Other works include sculptures such as *Abductor Red* (2000), a sinister crimson red elf holding onto the walls of the gallery, and abstract designs with irregular outlines, created in the typical lines and colors of cartoons.

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