

Flash Art

Bonnie Collura



Bonnie Collura, "Sleeping Death (Martyr Yellow)" - 1997 - Mixed Media: Foam, Putty, Paint & Wood - 78 x 58 x 51 inches

Bonnie Collura's imagination is morphing so fast her polystyrene forms can barely keep up. At her present pace, she'll run out of myths, fairy tales, and the recombinant derivatives for her claymation send-ups by her next solo show. If our dreams lack the hard edges contours of reality we've probably been channeling her Druidic woodland fantasies—part Tolkien, part Disney. Knobbed, ribbed, jutting, and dimpled, her melting taffy images come complete with holes and pegs like snap-together model toys, easy to assemble, however, they are not.

The slumped and disjointed deer in *Sleeping Death*, which seems to be propped on the stump of a tree shares formal affinities with Nauman's *Three Part Large Animals*. The stuffed, polyurethane cows that compose this piece are segmented and reassembled as corporeal anagrams, hinting that the head, seat of the intellect, has no more intrinsic value than say, the legs, or hindquarters. *Sleeping Death* and the amputated *Snow White*, sliced and spliced, melding the biblical legend of a swooning St. Theresa, with the myth of Persephone's banishment to the underworld, provide a leveling logic of their own, albeit narratively. *Cowboy Land* straddles the cliché of a Wild West roadside attraction, with the decapitated aftermath of a hunting trip—a strategically placed apple suggesting Paradise Lost. Some of her figures sport round eyelets on top as if they were once tourist kitsch or gas station souvenirs dangling from a keychain—perhaps a critique of Disney's endless product tie-ins and saccharine revivals of once sacred children's stories (*Aladdin*, *Hercules*, *Little Mermaid*) to which her tableaux make reference.

In hitting the high notes, the low notes, and everything in between, Collura situates herself between Matthew Barney's phantasmagorically overcoded *Cremaster* films, and Matthew Ritchie's cryptic, cartographic websites. At times, her sculptures suffer from "ambulatory schizophrenia"—they seem to uncton well enough to get by, but have a hard time relaxing an empathetic, interactive way. Still, they maintain their accessibility and openness with more than just sheer beauty.

David Hunt