



NEW YORK

Rebecca Horn
Sean Kelly Gallery

The works in "Cosmic Maps," Rebecca Horn's recent exhibition, continued to explore her enigmatic mechanisms, whose expressive content speaks of fragility, the beauty of a moment in time, the disasters of war, and even of a destructive urge that is quintessentially human. As situations in three dimensions, Horn's sculptures ingeniously use the locus of the gallery-as-site. These new examples are somewhat scaled down but just as powerful as her earlier works in terms of their elliptical, poetic density. Sculpture has always been an extension of

Horn's broader performance, film, and situational practice, and she has described her sculptures as "film compressed into its essence." Her three-dimensional works play on presence and absence, unfolding quietly dramatic events. The box pieces in this show have a stillness that becomes an equation for those moments in time that oddly escape the normal, with a touch of claustrophobic symbolism.

Shell Clock (2008) is a box-like container holding the most delicate, outer reach of a branch in an almost ikebana-like arrangement. A clock-like mechanism is affixed in the lower right section of the box; a shell placed above references the

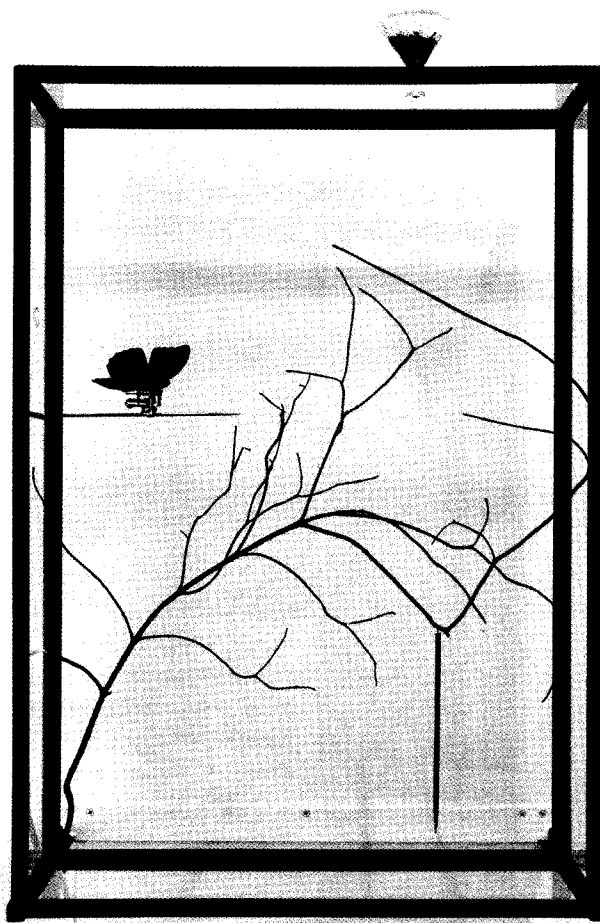
ocean and expands the mechanical mystery. The largest piece in the show, *The Snake's Ghost* (2008), occupied an entire darkened room. A cast shadow falls onto an adjacent wall, and a tiny instrument moves ever so methodically at intervals to touch the surface of a pool of water. We wait in the silence of the space as the instrument somewhat ponderously touches the water's surface and sets off ripples that reflect and resonate, just as our emotions do after an event.

In another box piece, *The Butterfly's Dream* (2008), butterfly wings open and close ever so slightly. Pure pigment placed on top of the box echoes the color of the wings, and a funnel form could allude to the containment of beauty, the regulation of color, or the pre-digital mechanical world. The nearly alchemical arrangement suspends viewers at the edge of our place in the world and in the broader cosmos.

Horn communicates something both poetic and personal, capturing our relation to process, to time as it passes. The conjunctions in her assemblages and mechanisms can be subtle and complex—traces or strands of feelings, they communicate large issues and ideas.

—John K. Grande

Left: Kim Jones, *Rat Dog*, 1973–2008. Mixed media, 42 x 16 x 17 in. Below: Rebecca Horn, *The Butterfly's Dream*, 2008. Iron, glass, brass, motor, butterfly wings, and pigment, 100 x 70 x 19 cm.



androgyny achieved through the merging of gender opposites. The reconciliation between inner and outer was reinforced in the front gallery, where waving lines connected the sculpted figures to the environment. The natural world entered the finite space through the organic materials, such as twigs and mud, that make up these three-dimensional forms.

Jones has placed his art within the collective consciousness in a watershed year of evolutionary change (as reflected in the U.S. election). "Year of the Rat" depicted the journey to the self as a labyrinth. The effect was liberating for the artist as well as for the viewer receiving his gift.

—L.P. Streitfeld

NEW YORK

Yong Ho Ji
Gana Art
Hyungkoo Lee
Arario Gallery

Two Korean artists raise questions about the relationship between nature and culture and how we view the body in art today. Yong Ho Ji's "Mutant" show featured a horse, a gigantic spider, a jaguar, a feathered dog with the face of an eagle, a shark, various bull heads, bears mixed with seals, a deer/donkey, goat heads hanging like hunting prizes, and a unicorn. Some of these hybrid animals, such as the unicorn, appear ironic and sad, illustrating



how culture can determine the outcome of nature. At close range, their fierce postures, wide-open mouths, and protuberant teeth provoke discomfort. Like mythological creatures materializing from the depths of the unconscious or a sci-fi film, these creatures demonstrate how biological manipulation can be contextualized as cultural spectacle. Ji draws parallels between the appearance of genetically modified animals and plants and human genetic disorders, suggesting that we are not only forcing a paradigmatic change in our natural environment, but also changing the role of humanity itself.

The "Mutant" series is rooted in Ji's childhood experiences. Growing up near a school for children with Down syndrome, Ji noticed how the children's ability to enjoy life contrasted with the greed and power-hungry tendencies of the general population. Ji's herbivorous animals express a similar innocence and acceptance of their fate, making them seem more human than humanity. At the same time, his carnivorous animals appear fierce and threatening. This duality between resignation and fear reflects the duality of scientific display and its connection to exoticization, exploitation, and marginalization through spectacle.

For smaller animals, such as the boar, hybrid dog, and goat, Ji builds

a clay mold, followed by a resin cast to create an anatomical frame. The overlaid strips of rubber, derived from tires, are applied in different sizes and shapes to allude to muscles or to suggest various hybrid parts (eagle feathers on a dog's body). Large animals, such as the horse, shark, jaguar, and spider, have skeletons made of steel and foam, with strips of rubber screwed into the skin as muscle and bone. These works are more roughly constructed, with some of the skeleton exposed.

Hyungkoo Lee's "Animatus" series explores skeletons of cartoon character hybrids. This body of work, consisting of drawings, photographs, and resin and steel sculptures, addresses how mass culture frames identity and ethnicity as byproducts of patriarchal dominance. As a young man studying and living in the U.S., Lee became aware of how his size, smaller than the average American, marginalized him. In earlier series, such as "Objectuals" (2002) and "The Homo Species" (2007), he attempted to manipulate his body to fit into the ethnic mainstream.

Above: Yong Ho Ji, *Ram Two Heads 2*, 2008. Used tires, steel, and Styrofoam, 36 x 26 x 37 in. **Right:** Hyungkoo Lee, *Canis Latrans Animatus*, 2005–06. Resin, aluminum, stainless steel wire, springs, and oil paint, 75 x 118 x 46 cm.

In "Animatus," however, Lee equates visual imagination with anatomical possibilities, carving through the gaps between three-dimensional skeletons and two-dimensional images. For example, since Bugs Bunny walks on two feet, his spinal structure had to be based on human rather than rabbit anatomy. Lee uses other cartoon characters such as Road Runner and Tom and Jerry as the final prototypes of their genealogical trees. *Lepus Animatus* (2005–06), the result of four generations of mammals leading to what appears to be the skeleton of Bugs Bunny, shows a *Homo erectus*/cartoon hybrid with a huge front tooth. Made of resin, aluminum sticks, stainless steel wires, springs, and oil paint, the approximately three-foot skeleton has the anatomical dimensions of an adult male with a tail, small pelvis, short legs and arms, with

four fingers and three toes. In all of these hybrid transformations, Lee employs the term "animatus" to address the genetic origins of his creations in cartoons. The specific metamorphosis that occurs in each of these generations is documented as scientific research through sketches and biological nomenclature.

Lee's installation was spectacular: skeletons hung from the ceiling, suspended by steel wires, as if in a natural history museum. With the rooms entirely darkened and the walls painted black, attention immediately focused on the brightly lit skeletons. Fluorescent lights and glass doors separated Lab 101 from the rest of the gallery, placing viewers on the outside as students or voyeurs. Inside the lab, where the artist and his team of assistants dressed in white, sculpting tools and brushes were inserted in wax



slabs like medical instruments and placed on a table strewn with bones, a magnifying glass, books about animals, large cans of paint, sketches of bones, a tripod, glass tubes, and the artist's large eyeglasses.

Lee's approach to anatomical display references historical artists such as Thomas Eakins as well as contemporary artists such as Gunther von Hagen. While genetic manipulation features in many works by contemporary artists, including Shawn Brixey, Richard Rinehart, Eduardo Kac, and Critical Art Ensemble, Ji's "Mutants" and Lee's "Animatus" restore an interest in the body via a conventional Western approach to sculpture. Basing their work on a realistic anatomical ideal, they move to subvert it by using the theatricality of mass culture and the psychological space of identity, thereby redefining sculpture not simply as aesthetic object, but also as cultural language.

—Denise Carvalho

CINCINNATI "Projections"

Manifest Gallery

"Projections" demonstrated that the "what if" factor, essential in the making of art, also adds zip to the showing of art. The gallery invited artists to submit "clearly sculptural [works], [with] three-dimensional space a key element, not in any way floor or pedestal based" and received responses from 130 artists in 33 states and eight countries. From that group, nine entrants, each from a different U.S. state, were chosen.

The sculptures went to the wall, with the exception of Eric Troffkin's *Lens Flare Cluster* (2007), which hung from the ceiling and took two days to install. Composed of variations on six-sided figures in roto-cast plastic, each with a pointed end, in pale shades of blue/lavender/pink moving to pink/yellow/green, the piece invited viewing from different

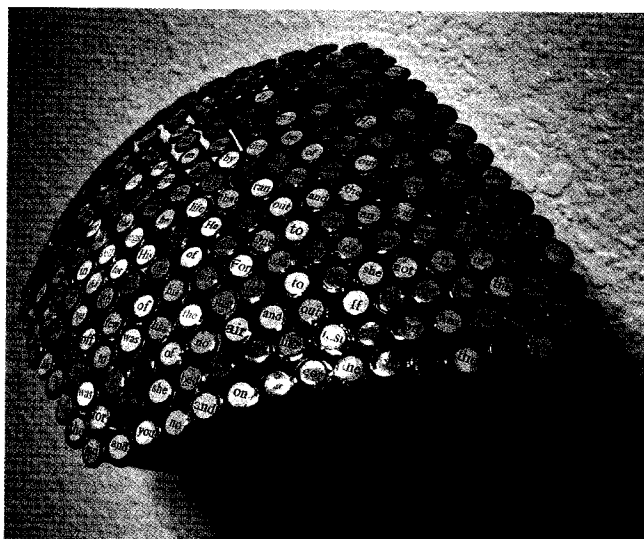


Above: Kristina Arnold, *Drip*, 2005. Glass, vinyl, string, and pins, detail of installation. Below: Jonathan Whitfill, *Rowd*, 2005. Welded nails, printed paper, and plastic coating, 6 x 9 x 4 in. Both from "Projections."

angles and suggested not only light, but also something seen under a microscope—that is to say, a magnification that throws off perception.

The 50 to 60 individual elements of Kristina Arnold's *Drip* (2005) looked to me like a marvelous spatula on the wall, liquid miraculously caught in the act of falling. Arnold

accomplished this sleight of hand with glass, vinyl, string, and pins. Jonathan Whitfill is a sly fellow, producing a set of nails welded together, their heads reminiscent of old typewriter keys but each imprinted with a brief word rather than a letter. *Rowd* (2007) has a pun for a name and a mischievous near-narrative that never quite takes off. Read up,



down, or sideways, it doesn't exactly make sense—unless I missed the key to it all.

Brass, steel, and nylon are listed as components of Trish Ramsay's *Thought of a Thought* (2007), but the unlisted element, shadow, is also a telling contributor. The shapes, formed by slender colored wires and accented by their shadows like lines in a drawing, might suggest a bird, maybe a cloud, almost a kite—like the thought that skims past and is gone. Adrienne Outlaw's *Fecund Series* is prodigious, as its name suggests, with 11 individual pieces created from 2002 to 2008. All deal with living, with birth, with life succored or death averted, and most require the viewer to put eye to peephole to see what is going on. What is seen, sometimes, is the reflection of one's own eye, but the intense inventiveness of nature appears to be the subject, conjured up by a most inventive artist.

Kevin Ewing gives the finger, in an affectionate way, to the car industry in *American Muscle* (2006), with metal car emblems embedded in huge, rectangular, wall-mounted vinyl cushions, while Shane Harris puts his series of three compositions into what look like soap dishes, jutting from the wall. Richard Herzog's *Simple As A Flower* (2005) is, of course, not simple at all. Twenty projections made of vinyl, acrylic mirrors, copper, and steel emerged from a five-foot-square section of wall, the metals imparting a deliberately non-flowery color to the piece and the whole both light and airy. For *Spitting Knowledge* (2006), Glenn Williams seems to have started with a shape like a coat hook and made it into a pair of bronze lips with a drip of steel spit, all superbly crafted. Created by resourceful, technically assured artists, the works in "Projections" provided the viewer with both visual and intellectual pleasure.

—Jane Durrell