

to hammer his points home. Tinged with sadness, these sculptures and drawings leave it to the viewer to connect the dots.

—Eleanor Heartney

William Tucker at McKee

Five gnarled blobs in dark, glistening bronze were arrayed on a white plinth near the gallery's entrance. Knotted yet sleek, they seemed to flop about like fish. Close perusal

of these works revealed them to be hands, life-size (for a grown man), loosely cupped or lightly clenched and bluntly severed above the wrist. Not long ago, William Tucker assiduously confounded the identification of such larval lumps, leaving their billowing, vaguely anatomical amorphousness tantalizingly inchoate. Yet even as his work becomes more conventionally legible, the artist is able to forestall the viewer's recognition of such abundantly familiar contours as the bunching convexities and concavities at the ends of his own arms.

Tactility is both symbolized and embodied in the vigorous surfaces of these hand-modeled hands. The pieces don't defy gravity so much as heighten the viewer's awareness of it, and, as with Brancusi, the relation of sculpture to base or pedestal is paramount. The 4-foot-long *Night* (2004) eventually registers as a hand resting on its back, generalized fingers firmly curled and forearm canted upward. The gleaming patina emphasizes highlights, and therefore modeling, despite which *Night* seems scarcely to bear on its pedestal. It is not a fragment but a synecdoche, expressing an entire body's coiled restlessness.

Cave (2003), conceived in plaster for eventual bronze casting, slumps on its pallet like a fallen centurion. It is the largest of the hands at nearly 8 feet long; as the

observer circumambulates it, a few degrees' shift changes the view from mysteriously abstract to overtly referential, bringing the viewer into an intimate, kinetic relation to the work. Here the identifying passage is the curve of the thumb to the fleshy bulge at its base to the rippling tendons of the wrist.

With the wrist bent, the tapering contour of forearm to fist resembles the head and neck of a horse, a similarity borne out by *Greek Horse* (2003), which rears up on its pedestal. The matte, variegated green patina diffuses light and contributes to the sense of weightlessness. The most descriptive work in the show, its source resides in the Elgin Marbles.

Indeed, each of these works has a source in other figurative sculpture. *Night*, for example, is derived from the unfinished left hand of Michelangelo's eponymous marble in the Medici Chapel. Elsewhere, viewers experience the slightly startling realization that an enormous, stumplike lump of plaster resembling a mutant cauliflower is a torso. The plaster *Dancer* (2002-04) is the latest of Tucker's monumental, radically truncated torsos in contrapposto, mid-thigh to chest, disguised by size and rough facture. The furrow identifying the spinal column leads to lumbar curve, coccyx and buttocks, disclosing that a jutting protuberance is a lifted right leg, ending at the knee. Developed from a disarmingly naturalistic Degas sculpture, *Dancer* similarly grapples with gravity, albeit on a vastly different scale than the little ballerina.

—Stephen Maine

Joseph Zito: *Untitled (Helmet)*, 2005, cast glass, steel and rose petals, 12 by 20 by 20 inches; at Lennon Weinberg.



William Tucker: *Dancer*, 2002-04, plaster, 92 by 93 by 94 inches; at McKee.

Michael Rakowitz at Lombard-Freid

Brooklyn-based artist Michael Rakowitz made a strong impression with this show, his first New York solo. Recognized over the last few years for his inflatable homeless shelters and other actions in public space that address deep-rooted social issues, Rakowitz here used his powers of invention to reconceive a commercial gallery as a laboratory of ideas about 20th-century American architecture.

The viewer was implicated from the start. On reaching the threshold, one had to decide whether or not to ascend a wooden ramp to a viewing platform. This unpainted structure wrapped around a large gray rectangular inflatable, which was modeled on the idealistic 1950s Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis. The regular deflation of the balloon, which listed slowly to one side like a torpedoed freighter, mimicked the dynamiting of the failed modernist housing block in 1972. Fifteen pairs of overlaid pencil drawings on vellum—the top sheet depicted pleasant houses, the bottom collapsing buildings—were tacked to the wall around the ramp. They served as rueful reminders that the rubble from Pruitt-Igoe was used as fill for a wealthy suburban development.

The architect who designed the Pruitt-Igoe project, Minoru Yamasaki, also designed another fallen complex, the World Trade Center. And, in fact, there were subtle allusions to the collapse

of the Twin Towers in Rakowitz's installation, which was titled *Dull Roar* (2005): the path of the angular ramp followed the trajectory of the second plane, and the tubular metal struts on the platform were based on those of the temporary viewing station at Ground Zero.

A second room, at the rear of the gallery, contained an interrelated set of four works on paper and four sculptures that address famous tragedies in the history of modern American architecture and industrial design. *Positive Agitation* (2005) typifies Rakowitz's method of doubling or tripling historical associations through clever combinations of industrial forms. The kinetic piece centered on the dust bag of a vintage Hoover vacuum that was inflated by regular gusts of air emanating from the wall via a tube connected to a car tailpipe. This breathing action seemingly mocked iconic designer Henry Dreyfuss's suicide from carbon monoxide poisoning. Elsewhere, two cartoonlike pencil drawings on vellum recounted the death of architect Louis Kahn in a Penn Station men's room. The photo-based images and droll expository texts were reminiscent of the work of Ben Katchor. The viewer could also push the button on a standard electric hand dryer, sending warm air through a plastic tube, thus inflating a small transparent version of the Twin Towers. In this engaging echo chamber of a show, architectural history repeated itself as farce.

—Daniel Belasco