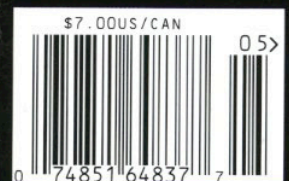


# sculpture

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**Lee Bul**  
**Chicago Sound Sculpture**  
**John McCracken**







Left: Berlinde de Bruyckere, *Inside me*, 2008–10. Cast iron, horse skin, epoxy, iron, and wood, 328.7 x 244.5 x 126.5 cm. Below: Won Ju Lim, *Baroque Pet Shop*, 2010. Mixed media and 5 video projections, installation view.

horse has been used throughout the Western canon, but *Inside me* particularly brings to mind the chapter in Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* describing in great detail the cries of wounded horses and the soldiers' hesitation to end their suffering.

In de Bruyckere's newest series, which departs from her more literal work, paired antlers hang in various configurations on the wall. These works, all called *Romeu (my deer)*, are also cast in iron, then covered with layers of wax and red pigment. The subtle allusions to death are now mythological—the antlers conjure the story of Actaeon, a young hunter who unwittingly caught a glimpse of the naked Artemis/Diana at her bath. Transformed into a stag by the furious goddess of the hunt, he was killed by his own dogs.

These pieces are intriguing for their subtlety and elegance; one work is even delicately wrapped in a soft gauze bandage.

de Bruyckere's work is arresting and disturbing, combining the dark with the light. It is comforting to know that the great existential

themes are still being explored, but with a contemporary touch, thus connecting our indifferent times to earlier, more impassioned periods. This bridge between the present and the past saturates de Bruyckere's work with spiritual wonder, the same feeling elicited by old master depictions of man's fate as rendered in paintings of Christ and the saints.

—Olga Stefan

#### SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

##### Won Ju Lim

##### Patrick Painter Inc.

Won Ju Lim's sweeping installation *Baroque Pet Shop* celebrates convergences in cinematically tactile and weirdly complete ways. It combines relics of Baroque architecture with the urban trappings of Los Angeles's Highland Park neighborhood, constructing an idiosyncratic environment in which embellished steeples, industrial scaffolding, and gaudy playthings make the ordinary indistinguishable from the ornate.

In the months preceding *Baroque Pet Shop*, Lim's sixth solo show with Patrick Painter and her most resonant yet, she traveled to Europe on a Media Arts Fellowship from the Tribeca Film Institute and the Rockefeller Foundation. She visited St. Petersburg, Munich, Dresden, Prague, and Vienna, all former strongholds of the Northern Baroque style and places where the remnants of an

consists of a body lying sideways on a pillow, encased in a vitrine—headless, armless, with feet together in a contorted twist. The figure was made from a wax cast of a male model, so it is hollow on the inside, allowing us to peek into the body's cavity through the empty space where the head and neck would have been. The texture of the wax seems skin-like, and the addition of red pigment evokes blood. How can a corpse still contain the color of life? de Bruyckere brings the horrible reality of death into our consciousness. Like the vitrine-encased casts of Vesuvius' victims, *Lange eenzame man* becomes a permanent testament to human suffering. Yet his pose, the fragility of the body itself, and the pillow underneath also reference depictions of Christ.

In *Inside me*, de Bruyckere uses a new material, iron, to tackle the

beautiful and the terrifying. A horse carcass is cast in iron and covered with horse skin, a method that objectifies the horrors of violent death by focusing on graceful form. The visions of destruction triggered by this work are only too timely. As a symbol of the tragedy of war, the





opulent past penetrate the modern cityscape. She filmed these survivors and, on her return, reconstructed what she'd seen in multi-modal ways, fabricating pristine models of palaces and cathedrals, geometric abstractions of cities, kitschy tin-foil ruins, and misshapen steeples.

In the show, Lim's re-imagined miniature cityscapes stood on pedestals scattered throughout the gallery. Two tall shelves and additional pedestals held vases, stemware, dishes, and bottles that playfully posed as thrift-store equivalents of Baroque style. The most incongruous elements, however, were surreal white sculptures approximating the shapes of scratching posts and pet toys. Ungainly and austere, they resembled what might have resulted had Louise Nevelson built a pet paradise inside a St. Petersburg ice palace.

The only light came from rotating video projections showing a cathedral and a crowded Highland Park pet shop. The overlapping images cast eerie shadows as they moved over the room, giving Lim's installation a crude coherence; at some point, each shape shadowed over every other shape, pulling individual

elements into the same slowly circulating narrative.

Lim has worked with ruins, architectural models, and video projections before, constructing colored Plexiglas habitats that loosely allude to L.A.'s urban landscape. But never before has she offered such a compelling and eccentric sense of place. Each of the cities that Lim visited on her sojourn fell into dismal disrepair in the 20th century, wars and political upheavals leaving once luxurious palaces and cathedrals looking garish and out of place. Highland Park, once one of L.A.'s most affluent neighborhoods, fell victim to white flight during the 1920s; the subsequent influx of 99-cent stores and discount groceries made the surrounding Victorian houses look pretentious.

Lim offers no sensible explanation as to why the Northern Baroque should mingle with the accoutrements of a made-up Highland Park pet shop. But explanation would be superfluous. While Baroque architecture will always occupy an unmoving position in the canon of Western history, and an Angeleno pet shop—especially one that may or may not actually exist—must neces-

sarily occupy a small, ephemeral place in local imaginations, Lim's environment fit two misfits together perfectly.

—Catherine Wagley

#### MIAMI

##### Claire Fontaine

##### MOCA North Miami

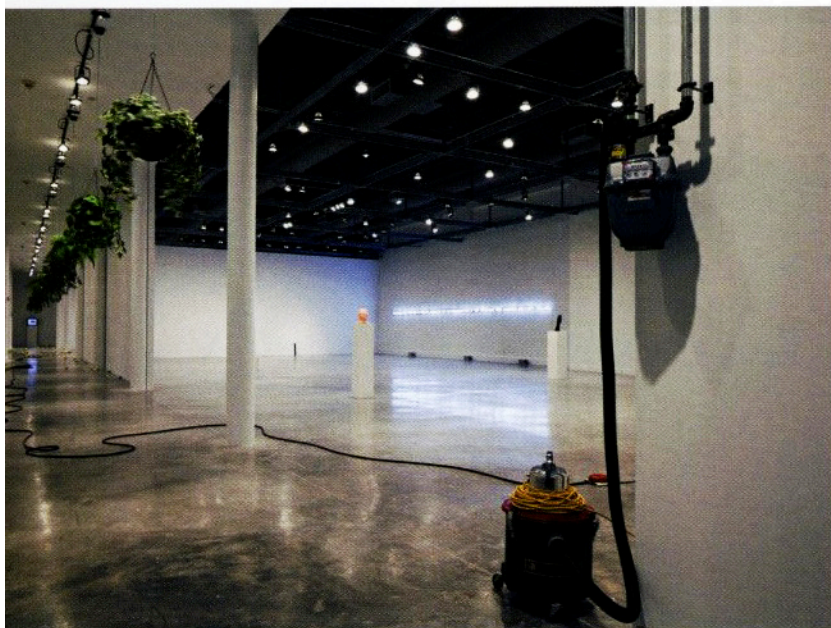
The French collective Claire Fontaine, a man-and-woman team named after the utilitarian Clairefontaine notebooks, play with language throughout their work. "Economies," the title of their first American exhibition, immediately calls to mind the economies that one must make in tough financial times; the ready-made sculptures also pose more theoretical, global economic questions.

The sculptures were installed in three connected rooms. As one entered, a motion detector started the loud vacuum cleaner in *Recession Sculpture* (*American Gas*). Behind it, 200 tennis balls spread across the floor in *Untitled* (*Tennis Ball Sculpture*). They initially seemed comic, even cheerful, an anarchic tableau à la Dada, but many of the bright yellow balls were cut open, with acne cream, toothpaste, tampons, and a

wide range of other "illicit" items spilling out. In prison, it turns out, tennis balls are a form of currency—prisoners use them to sneak things inside. Meanwhile, the numbers on the gas meter attached to the vacuum in *Recession Sculpture* were moving backwards, as if concealing energy consumption. With Claire Fontaine, the apparently whimsical is, in fact, social commentary.

Hanging plastic plants (Claire Fontaine saw similar specimens in a nearby diner) twirled over these tableaux, while projections referred to a North Miami hotel. The installation thus became a meta-installation, an exhibition about making an exhibition. Small screening areas off the central galleries showed films that complemented the ready-mades. In one, Claire Fontaine videotaped their taxi ride to MOCA from the Miami airport. The taxi

**Left:** Claire Fontaine, *Recession Sculpture* (*American Gas*), 2009. Gas meter, pipes, valves, vacuum cleaner, motion detector, and mixed media, installation view. **Below:** Claire Fontaine, installation view of *Untitled* (*Fist*), 2006, and *Untitled* (*Tennis Ball Sculpture*), 2006.



LEFT: STEVEN BROOKE, COURTESY THE ARTISTS AND REINA SPAULINGS FINE ART, NY / RIGHT: STEVEN BROOKE, COURTESY THE ARTISTS, GALLERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL, PARIS, REINA SPAULINGS FINE ART, AND METRO PICTURES, NY