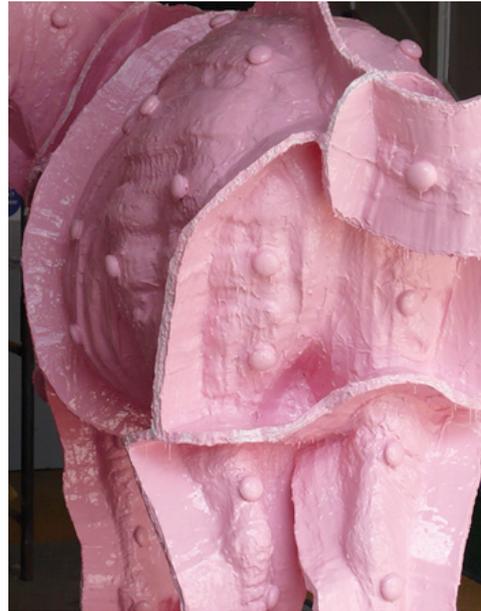


Michael Joo

October 22 – December 5, 2009

October 9, New York—Four years after the artist's last one-person exhibition at The Bohen Foundation in New York, Michael Joo presents new large-scale sculptures and paintings in his fifth solo show at Anton Kern Gallery. Joo continues to investigate the symbolical significance of the physical world by engaging with a wide range of often-incongruent materials, mixing high- and low-tech, nature and artifice.

Two life-size zebra sculptures dominate the space, one pink, and the other polished bronze, absorbing and reflecting its surroundings. A miniature zebra on an oversized metal tray, a large anemone-shaped painted bronze of antler molds, cast and twisted Elk antlers, several paintings of animal parts, as well as a figure with flight suit and a halo of cameras complete the show.



It becomes instantly clear that the artist intervenes with nature's course of development of form. At first sight, the work reveals itself only slowly. What is being reproduced here? What is depicted? What materials were used? Are the objects casts or molds? What is handcrafted, what is mechanically reproduced or even digitally cloned? What hides under the material surfaces? What does a term like "life-size" even mean in this context?

Joo interrupts the natural process of development in favor of human decision-making. He brings this process to a halt, objectifies it in order to address and understand the realm of the physical. For example, the large pink sculpture is a painted cast bronze of a blanket-mold that was used in the reproduction of another sculpture, namely the polished bronze zebra. The pink surface/exterior obscures what it is casting; the object you cannot see becomes a different, implied object. The work's identity does not only change, it becomes two at once simultaneously. The artist's play with the haptic qualities of the sculptures (relating to the sense of touch, e.g. rubbery vs. hard metal) and his pushing of material against material multiplies this vibrating identity effect. Two strands of reality are addressed at once, complicated by the fact that the "real" sculpture is also present and in front of our eyes.

Michael Joo lives and works in New York. He has had solo exhibitions at the Anchorage Museum, Anchorage, Alaska (2008); Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul (2006); Asia Society, New York; The Bohen Foundation (both 2005); and MIT List Visual Art Center, Cambridge (2003), Whitney Museum, New York (2000). He represented South Korea at the 49th Venice Biennale (2001). His work was also included in *NeoHooDoo: Art of a Forgotten Faith*, a group show that traveled from The Menil Collection, Houston, to the Miami Art Museum, Miami, FL and P.S.1 MoMA (2009).

For further details on the artist and the work, as well as for more images, please contact Anton Kern Gallery at (t) 212.367.9663, (f) 212.367.8135 or email: info@antonkerngallery.com.

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