

Petzel

Soliloquies

March 14 – April 20, 2024
520 West 25th Street

Petzel Gallery is pleased to present *Soliloquies*, a group exhibition of sculpture by 18 artists, on view from March 14 to April 20, 2024 at Petzel's Chelsea location. Comprised of exclusively freestanding sculpture, *Soliloquies* opens multiple vantage points for the encircling viewer, uniting multi-disciplinary artists who all use sculpture in their practices: Walead Beshty, Cosima von Bonin, Keith Edmier, Derek Fordjour, Nikita Gale, Georg Herold, Sean Landers, Allan McCollum, Rodney McMillian, Malcolm Morley, Jorge Pardo, Joyce Pensato, Seth Price, Stephen Prina, Jon Pylypchuk, Tschabalala Self, Raphaela Vogel, and Heimo Zobernig.

Representing an array of processes, from handcrafted to digitally printed, this group of works surveys three-dimensional media across various technologies, source materials, and scales. *Soliloquies* stages a forum between subject and object, actor and spectator, figure and form, where the traditional white cube becomes an illuminated pavilion, activated by the viewer. Spectators may commune with the artworks at many angles, each sculpture illuminated by their own pool of light.

In 1988, Allan McCollum began his *Perfect Vehicle* series: vessel-sculptures modeled from Chinese ginger jars, made of cast glass fiber reinforced concrete, devoid of an opening, eliminating the use-value function of the *objet d'art*. The surrealist scale of McCollum's six-foot Kelly green *Perfect Vehicle* (1988/2004) and its representational form signals to Heimo Zobernig and Derek Fordjour's bronzes of human figures. Raphaela Vogel's *Unspecial Agent 1* evokes the casting process through its caged hollowness, its feet puddled with bronze, in good company with Keith Edmier's aptly named *A Shell of My Former Self* (2000–2023), a new form born within a fiberglass mother mold of an earlier self-portrait. Pop and folk icons and are also made real, looming throughout the space, from Sean Lander's Greek half-god *Pan* (2006) to Joyce Pensato's *Tipsy Donald* (2020) to Cosima von Bonin's *IDLER #124 (THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE VERSION)* (2011), a seated Pinocchio-like figure perched high on an umpire's chair.

Processes of mythmaking, wielded through feats of physicality, weight, and size, also arise among these artists. Nikita Gale's *TALENT 15LBS* (2023), comprised of hanging scales, sound equipment, flat weights, and a shop crane, underscores the weight of the performer's talent, a term originally used in ancient Rome, Egypt and Assyria to refer to the approximate load that could be carried by one person. This performed defiance of gravity becomes a metric for stardom, à la Tina Turner's crane, or Evel Knievel's stunt jumps. The absence of the body is also made evident in Rodney McMillian's *Couch* (2012): a sateen, striped sofa with a concrete intervention down the middle. Through discarded objects of domestic life, McMillian signals the public and the private, and broader social histories as they relate to the body politic. An intimate portrait of grief, the absence of the body is clothed in polished bronze among Jon Pylypchuk's cavernous ghosts, made after the loss of a dear friend.

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Soliloquies reveals nuances inherent to these artists and their methodologies. Malcolm Morley's bronze *Marker* (1989) mimics a stack of cinderblocks, originally constructed as a pedestal for the model tanks and soldiers that would populate his paintings. Georg Herold's *Untitled* (1993), a burlap bag filled with bricks and a caviar can, similarly features a familiar commodity from the artist's seminal Caviar Paintings, continuing to generate fresh, playful associations. Tschabalala Self's *The Soft Kiss* (2023) translates Self's engagement with sewn, printed, and painted materials from the canvas to the round. Self captures an intimate moment on display, a staged repose of two foam-filled figures, larger than life, clothed in textiles, tender to the touch. Jorge Pardo extends his painterly treatment of surface, color, and line to *Udo's table and Chairs* (2023), considering the table as canvas, and fraying borders between furniture and sculpture.

Selected source materials further highlight questions of production and re-production, the sculpture as artifact or facsimile. Stephen Prina allegorizes fatherhood in his *English for Foreigners: Three Wood Shavings* (2017). Beerhall tables draped in fabric designed by the artist function as an altar/reliquary displaying cypress, cedar, and pine wood shavings; an allusion to Joseph the Carpenter as well as the three wood types, according to a biblical interpretation, used to construct the cross of Jesus of Nazareth. Seth Price reproduces an image from the Lascaux Caves on transparent PETG in his *Double Hunt* (2006–07) sculptures, investigating duplication and simulation processes relating to the Paleolithic paintings, which were closed to the public in 1963 and reproduced twenty years later as the concrete bunker facsimile *Lascaux II*. Walead Beshty's fractured ceramic assemblage, made from the slip cast remnants of a manufacturer based in Guadalajara, Mexico, gestures to questions of labor, exploitation, and utility.

As the late Malcolm Morley notes in a 2011 interview, "One thing I would say is that with painting, you are kind of outside the action, but with sculpture, you're always in it." *Soliloquies* invites the spectator to encounter each freestanding work as a singular snapshot of an artist's ethos, their visual language in the third dimension. However, *Soliloquies* also considers unexpected links in modes of making, staging revelations on process and materiality across each artist's practice.

Petzel Gallery is located at 520 West 25th Street New York, NY 10001. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Ricky Lee at ricky@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.