

Stop-Motion

Keith Edmier and Allan McCollum

September 9 – October 23, 2010



Memory, materiality, monsters, and motion; the layering and excavation of these form the crux of a show at the Friedrich Petzel Gallery that juxtaposes the work of artists Allan McCollum and Keith Edmier. Both artists have long-standing fascinations with the mysteries of molds and the casts they generate, whether they are created by nature or culture or intricate mergings of the two. The new and newly combined pieces embody the artists' desire to bring life to the inanimate, invisible, absent or imaginary. The concept of frozen time - or life stopped and examined at a single moment - forms the mirror side of this desire.

The title of the show, *Stop-Motion*, is drawn from the memories each artist has of the childhood impact that motion picture special effects, particularly the work of special effects artist Ray Harryhausen, had upon them. In 'Delusion and Dream', Freud proposed that volcanic eruption and archaeological excavation formed the consummate material analogy for how memory is buried and revealed in the psyche. In *Stop-Motion*, McCollum taps directly into the culturally redolent site that inspired Freud - the Roman city of Pompeii buried in AD 79 - by including sixteen of the highly evocative and iconic casts from his work titled *The Dog from Pompeii* (1991). The dogs are seemingly identical to one another except for the way that each cast is positioned in relation to its neighbor. As each dog is rotated slightly in its relative position to its neighbor, in looking at the entire work a sense of animation or movement is created; in viewing a single dog, it is as though one is viewing a still frame from a film.

McCollum's work provides the counterpoint to a new work titled *Adonaïs* by Edmier. The first sculpture in a body of work collectively titled 'The Modern Man-Demon', the piece contains two human hearts - that of the artist and of a female archaeologist - which are cast in basalt using data from MRI scans. The use of basalt, or hardened volcanic magma, links thematically to Freud's fascination with Pompeii and the volcanic materials which both destroyed and preserved it. The lead box lined with silver that encases the hearts is reminiscent of the heart burials conducted in Medieval Europe and then incorporated into sentimental, aristocratic tradition through the nineteenth century. It is Freud's own personal fetish for artifact collection and archaeology that is evoked by Edmier, who extends the denotation of 'art' and 'object' capable of collection to include human body parts. One heart wells with life blood, the other is captured in contraction; viewed together, they seemingly provide material animation of a single frozen heartbeat. Like the casts of the long-dead dog in McCollum's piece, the casts of still living hearts in Edmier's work hint at arrested motion.

Motion and the cessation of motion; animation and reanimation; the promiscuous boundaries between art and artifact, subject and object, science and art: what remains rigidly fixed around these permeable categories for living creatures is time. McCollum and Edmier - in *Stop-Motion* - stop time.

For more information please contact the gallery at 212.680.9467 or info@petzel.com.