

Salon 94 is pleased to present Masterpieces, an exhibition of new sculpture by Barry X Ball. This is the artist's first solo show with the gallery and the US debut of this body of work. The show features three figurative works in stone, immaculately executed with groundbreaking techniques while directly engaging their historical antecedents.

Armed with contemporary technology that enables digital scanning and manipulation of three-dimensional objects, Ball collected data on two Baroque masterpieces in the permanent collection of Ca'Rezzonico, Venice— La Purità (Dama Velata), by Antonio Corradini, and La Invidia by Orazio Marinali.

Purity, a response to Corradini, is on display in both golden honeycomb calcite and white Iranian onyx—semi-translucent stones not traditionally used for sculpture that transcend the limitations of marble to blur the lines between stone, flesh, and cloth. The translucency of the materials creates the illusion of the sculptures emanating light, simultaneously conveying the warmth of human flesh and the diaphanous qualities of a veil. With sumptuous finishes that highlight the sensuality of exposed flesh, Purity is inevitably imbued with eroticism despite its virtuous title.

Envy, executed in Belgian black marble, augments the terror and pathos of Marinali's Medusa-like figure by enhancing its dimensionality and carnality. With laboriously refined details, Ball's snake-headed woman escapes the confinement of Marinali's frontal portrait, reemerging as a personified monster incarnate. Envy's brittle skin, sagging breasts, and horrific screaming mouth confront the viewer with a sense of imminent mortality.

Together, Envy and Purity reveal the contradictions of their allegorical predecessors, calling into question the piousness and objectivity of the sculptor's eye throughout the history of art. Jewel-like in their execution, they radiate an excruciating intensity driven by Ball's perverse perfectionism, humorously mitigated by his playful insouciance towards the Baroque masters.

Barry X Ball was born in 1955 in Pasadena, CA and lives and works in New York. His work has been exhibited at PS 1 Contemporary Art Center, SITE Santa Fe, Ballroom Marfa, and Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. His work is in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Norton Museum of Art, and Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. In 2011, he will have a solo show at Musée d'art de Joliette in Montreal, accompanied by a catalogue to be published on the occasion of the exhibition.

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