

MICHAEL E. SMITH / 11.02.13 - 12.21.13

Typically mysterious, the prompt I receive, entitled 'Inspiration' to write the press release for Michael E. Smith's second show at Clifton Benevento gallery is puzzling to say the least. The terse content of the email is: "skull chips and laptops", which either illustrates or is illustrated by an iPhone quality image of a couple of classic Mac laptops mouse pads with round holes drilled into the mouse pad and white-bone looking objects, ostensibly the size of poker chips, inserted into the holes. The topography of the white bone like objects is uneven, landscape-like, one of which is reminiscent of a stalagmite. Although I'm no stranger to Michael E. Smith's work, the possibility that I am actually looking at "chips" fashioned out of human skull and conjoined with defunct and mutilated lap tops terrifies me as much as it makes me laugh. This image is accompanied by an iPhone video of an early 2000's center console from a mini van, which is placed on top of a short rod and engineered with a ball bearing unit, which allows the console to rotate. The video features the object animistically spinning in the penumbra of what I picture to be Smith's studio. As for the rest, I am told by the artist, it is impossible to say, as a lot will change and happen in the gallery space itself— space being a crucial element to Smith's sculptural interventions. If I have come to expect anything from Michael E. Smith's work, it is, along with a risibly morbid penchant for reconfiguring urban flotsam and jetsam in spatially dramatic ways, that I am never quite sure what to expect. Indeed, for all anyone knows, the two works described in this press release might not even end up in the show. – Chris Sharp

*Michael E. Smith holds an M.F.A. from Yale University and currently lives and works in New Hampshire. Recent solo exhibitions include Ludwig Forum, Aachen, Germany; St. Louis Museum of Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MO; Monchehaus Museum, Goslar, Germany. His work was featured in the 2012 Whitney Biennial, Sculpture Center's 'A Disagreeable Object' (both NY) and 'Le Silence. Une Fiction', Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco. Upcoming projects include solo exhibitions at CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France (November 2013) and Power Station, Dallas, TX (February, 2014).*

*The exhibition will run from November 2 to December 21, 2013; opening reception is Saturday, November 2 from 5-7pm. The gallery is located at 515 Broadway, New York; opening hours are 11am-6pm Tuesday through Saturday. For further details, please contact Michael at [mc@cliftonbenevento.com](mailto:mc@cliftonbenevento.com) or via phone at 212.431.6325.*