

sculpture

December 2010
Vol. 29 No. 10

A publication of the
International Sculpture Center
www.sculpture.org



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\$7.00US / CAN



074851648377



Price is an artist of genuine ingenuity and integrity, and he remains at the top of his game in his recent work. This show featured three large-scale works and a host of smaller, tabletop sculptures. There is something wild and wacky about these recent pieces, with their variegated, cratered surfaces and comic configurations. It seems hard to imagine their being constructed on the East Coast, with its emphasis on white-cube theory.

Consisting of combining and overlapping forms with rounded surfaces like amoebas, Price's sculptures look like extravagantly imagined, functionless '50s furniture, or simple piles of dung. They are intuitive and expansive in nature, rejecting intellectual analysis for the inherent persuasiveness of organic shapes. The marvelous *Lying Around* (2009), constructed of painted bronze composite, does just that: it lies about, its overall shape looking rather like extruded globs of paste that don't amplify form so much as reject it. The gold surface is pitted, revealing

small craters with differently colored edges. This effect results from overlapping coats of paint that Price sands down to reveal the history of the treatment. Up close, viewers find a consistent surface from one sculpture to the next, one that works small wonders of color, in contrast to the large, single-hued shapes seen from a distance.

Percival (2009), another bronze composite work in bright orange, looks like a rising coil, with a tubular shape attached to its exterior. Even as the sculpture moves upward, it is hard to forget the homely nature of the form, whose circling movement inevitably suggests the digestive process. One senses that Price takes a certain amount of glee in his work, which remains funny and accessible. In this way, he approaches the various emanations

Above: Ken Price, *Maureen*, 2009. Fired and painted clay, 51 x 46 x 43 cm. **Right:** George Segal, *Bus Passengers*, 1997. Plaster, wood, metal, and paint, 53 x 42 x 16 in.

of California Pop, even though his work takes on pure abstraction. *The Loop* (2009), a smaller work made of fired and painted clay, offers an exquisite gold-blue surface and a tubular shape that forms a single loop from what looks like a foot. One always hesitates to say what these forms are about or what they look like, primarily because they are so self-sufficiently themselves. Even so, the bigger issues, such as craft and a feeling for rightness of form, are so well handled by Price that we can only admire his inventiveness and creativity.

—Jonathan Goodman

NEW YORK George Segal L&M Arts

George Segal's recent large-scale show at L&M Arts came on the heels of a 2008–09 traveling exhibition, "George Segal: Street Scenes," organized by the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Both shows have brought renewed attention to one of the major figurative sculptors of the postwar era, who in addi-

tion to his own considerable accomplishments, should be seen as foreshadowing the many contemporary artists—Kiki Smith, Juan Muñoz, Antony Gormley, and Robert Gober among them—who work with the cast human figure. Although Segal was a charter member of the Pop group (largely because of his interest in the artifacts of vernacular culture), he never fit seamlessly into the movement. His straightforward, often rough-hewn productions are devoid of the irony so commonly found in his colleagues' work, and unlike them, he displayed no interest in either celebrating or critiquing the media world. Instead, he made psychologically attuned art full of human feeling and passion, as well as social commitment—not Pop's strongest suit. This put him closer to earlier American realist painters like Thomas Eakins, George Bellows, John Sloan, Reginald Marsh, and Edward Hopper. These artists, like Segal, paid attention to the jobs that people did, to the ordinary pleasures they took, and to the quotidian, unglamorous,



TOP: © KEN PRICE / COURTESY MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY, NY / BOTTOM: TOM POWEL IMAGING, INC., COURTESY L&M ARTS

often scruffy urban life that surrounded them.

Segal's realism is complex and disjunctive. His settings seem to be transferred directly from the workaday world. Here is a real park bench, there is an actual street sign or a genuine bus seat and grab bar. On the other hand, the cast plaster or bronze figures are much less specific. Their features are blurred, passive, almost submerged. They seem to be a kind of screen on which to project our thoughts and feelings. Segal is very aware of the spaces between things—the unoccupied seats in *Three People on Four Benches* (1979), the subtly charged distance that separates the three figures in *Chance Meeting* (1989), or the uncomfortable proximity of seated and standing riders in *Bus Passengers* (1997). Since the elements of a Segal piece are all life-sized, it is inevitable that we insert ourselves into the tableau, become part of a frozen performance.

The performative aspect of Segal's work is noteworthy. Early connections with the composer and avant-garde muse, John Cage, interactions with the Fluxus artists associated with nearby Rutgers University (Segal lived in the New Brunswick, New Jersey, area for his entire professional life), as well as close association with Allan Kaprow and his Happenings put Segal's work into a broader context of avant-garde experimentation of the time. In addition, sharp-eyed engagement with the ordinary world sets up a dialogue with photographers like Garry Winogrand, Lee Friedlander, and Segal's friend, Robert Frank. Like these classic American street photographers, Segal was looking for a revelation of humanity in the telling moment, the cropped section of time and place that allowed feeling and form to combine for the greatest impact. And like these photographers, Segal allowed his formal abilities to play a key role in his work. His subject



Above: View of the Rodin Courtyard at the North Carolina Museum of Art. Below: Jaume Plensa, *Doors of Jerusalem I, II, & III* (detail), 2006. Resin, stainless steel, and light, 47.25 x 62 x 80.75 in.

matter was indeed powerful, but composition, texture, and degree of finish, scale, color, and spatial interplay make the sculptures work. This is especially evident in the sculptures that do not feature the human figure, for example, the subtle and evocative *Morandi's Still Life* (1983)—a plaster and wood still-life of four bottles and a pitcher that strikingly re-imagines the painter's work. The L&M exhibition, inclusive, carefully chosen, and beautifully installed in the gallery's elegant townhouse space, showed Segal's work to real advantage. It seems that the artist, too long confined to the restrictive context of Pop Art, is now moving out into a wider world.

—Richard Kalina

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA **New Contemporary Sculpture Acquisitions**

North Carolina Museum of Art
In conjunction with the opening of its new West Building, the North Carolina Museum of Art has expanded its contemporary sculpture collections with works by Roxy Paine, Ursula von Rydingsvard, El Anatsui, Patrick Dougherty, and Jaume Plensa. New York architect Thomas Phifer tailored the building's design to a diverse collection of 3,840 objects spanning a 5,000-year period, creating a light-filled backdrop for art. Glass walls combine with open sculpture and water courts to trace transparent and literal connections joining nature, art, and architecture. The

building and grounds are "green" in every sense, including underground and rooftop water-management features for recycling rain and air-conditioning condensate, advanced ventilation systems, and other energy- and water-saving features.

The original East Building has also undergone a renovation and now features 15,000 square feet of exhibition space, as well as education, library, administrative, and storage spaces. The museum grounds dou-

ble as a 164-acre nature preserve, complete with manicured paths, short nature trails featuring outdoor sculpture, and a 1997 outdoor amphitheater created in collaboration with Barbara Kruger.

