



A R T O B S E R V E D

## GO SEE – LOS ANGELES: PAUL MCCARTHY ‘THREE SCULPTURES’ AT L & M ARTS THROUGH NOVEMBER 6, 2010

October 4th, 2010



Paul McCarthy, *Ship of Fools, Ship Adrift*, 2010. All images via [L & M Arts](#).

[L & M Arts](#) is currently celebrating the inauguration of their Los Angeles branch with ‘Three Sculptures;’ an exhibition of new work by transgressive sculptor, filmmaker, and performance artist [Paul McCarthy](#). Three large-scale pieces in differing mediums are installed throughout the gallery’s [well-received](#) new space, which consists of two adjacent buildings and an outdoor garden. The property was transformed from a disused power station and (literally) a pile of bricks, by local architect Kulapat Yantrasast, with gallery co-founder Robert Mnuchin personally designing the garden landscape. The works on view in this important exhibition reflect the artist’s continued exploration of certain themes and motifs which have pervaded his work for nearly twenty years.



Paul McCarthy, *Ship of Fools, Ship Adrift*, 2010.



Paul McCarthy, *Ship of Fools, Ship Adrift (detail)*, 2010.

*Ship of Fools, Ship Adrift*, an eight-ton bronze sculpture depicting tragically-warped German Hummel figurines, is installed in the gallery's main building. "Adorable and obscene all at once," the work represents the artist's enduring preoccupation with both mid-century kitsch and the dichotomy between innocence and defilement. The simultaneously sleek-yet-textured quality of the cast children's complexions lays bare the commercial exploitation of youth, and the manufactured results of a consumer-driven ideal of impossible purity.



Paul McCarthy, *Ship of Fools, Ship Adrift* (detail), 2010.



Paul McCarthy, *Train, Mechanical*, 2003- 2010.

*Train, Mechanical*, is a fully-automated mixed-media work in which the sculpted likeness of George W. Bush engages in serialized bestiality with a number of pigs. The manufactured ménage-à-trois is completed by a lateral, third-party pig, who penetrates the fore-facing pig in the ear (a sexual maneuver described by Christopher Walken in an SNL skit as “Shin-Shee-Shin-Shee”). The piece functions as both a political satire and a parody of popular amusement park rides like Disney’s *Pirates of the Caribbean*. With “process as sculpture” as a subtext, McCarthy addresses nuanced cultural mechanisms in a vocabulary which retains essential, playful relevance to the practice of art making.



Paul McCarthy, *Train, Mechanical*, 2003- 2010.

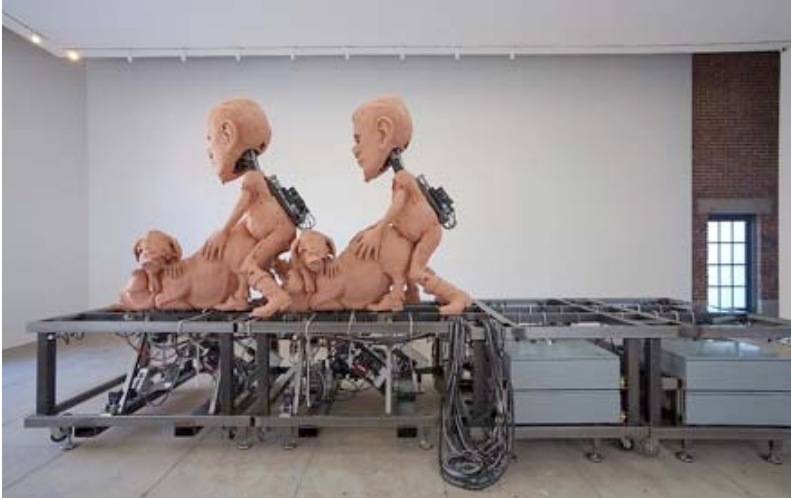




Paul McCarthy, *Train, Mechanical*, 2003- 2010.



Paul McCarthy, *Train, Mechanical (detail)*, 2003- 2010.



Paul McCarthy, *Train, Mechanical*, 2003- 2010.



Paul McCarthy, *Train, Mechanical*, (detail) 2003- 2010.



Paul McCarthy, *Apple Tree Boy Apple Tree Girl*, 2010.

The exhibition's outdoor component, *Apple Tree Boy Apple Tree Girl*, is an aptly tongue-in-cheek reference to the gallery's newly-realized manifest destiny. An extension of the Hummel aesthetic portrayed indoors, the male and female sculptures play Adam and Eve to the Californian Garden of Eden they inhabit. Their capacity to retain material firmness and solidity while texturally seeming to melt embodies the literary trope of an optimistic westward voyage. The implicit naïveté of the Hummel motif is materially deconstructed, portraying a sophisticated fall from grace in simultaneously literal and metaphorical terms.



Paul McCarthy, *Apple Tree Boy Apple Tree Girl*, 2010.





Paul McCarthy, *Apple Tree Boy Apple Tree Girl*, 2010.



Paul McCarthy, *Apple Tree Boy Apple Tree Girl*, 2010





Paul McCarthy, *Apple Tree Boy Apple Tree Girl*, 2010.

Paul McCarthy was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1945. He received his MFA from the University of Southern California in 1972, where he concentrated in film and video, and taught at UCLA from 1982 until 2002. 'Three Sculptures' is his first exhibition in Los Angeles in nearly a decade.

-S.Humphrey