



George Stoll, *Untitled (43 tumblers in a holiday arrangement)*, detail, 2008, beeswax, paraffin, and pigment on a painted wooden shelf and painted wooden pedestal, 74" x 100" x 12". Kim Light/Lightbox.

George Stoll

Kim Light/Lightbox
Los Angeles

This exhibition of sculptures and drawings brought together two very different bodies of work by George Stoll, both of which blend his interests in American consumer culture and Catholic iconography.

In the first room was a series of 21 small drawings, each a colorful, geometric composition rendered in tiny, delicate strokes of pencil. Carefully drawn within broad white borders in a variety of shapes, they evoked both stained-glass windows and hard-edged abstractions of the '60s. Their luminosity was echoed across the room by a large white wooden structure. Reminiscent of a cityscape, the structure is pierced with several small, rectangular holes, each one glowing in a different color. A look behind the piece revealed that the colored "windows" were actually wax models of Tupperware drinking cups. This reference to domesticity and childhood imbues the otherwise somber piece with a gentle humor and counters any spiritual pretensions.

Stoll's ability to find the sublime in the ordinary came through more strongly in the show's selection of cast-plaster sculptures. There were bones, ears, breasts, and skulls, as well as two casts of stacked jack-o'-lanterns. Pure white and smoothed over with Spackle, gesso, and sealer to create

shiny, rounded surfaces, the bones and body parts hold no macabre associations, becoming almost cartoonish. With their references to church relics, these pieces—most memorably an arrangement of three skulls in different sizes resting on a large leg bone—poke fun at the commodification of religious experience. By contrast, the stacked jack-o'-lanterns suggest the immortalization of disposable objects. Piled three high and cast in ghostly white, the grinning plastic containers took on an otherworldly aspect. They became a new kind of relic, of childhood perhaps.

—Sharon Mizota

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KIM LIGHT / LIGHTBOX

2680 S. LA CIENEGA BLVD. LA. CA 90034
T. 310.559.1111 / F. 2911
INFO@ / WWW.KIMLIGHTGALLERY.COM



Pictured: George Stoll Untitled (43 tumblers in a holiday arrangement) [Forward and reverse views], 2008
Beeswax, paraffin, and pigment on a painted wooden shelf and painted wooden pedestal 74 x 100 x 12"

PALE FIRE

**New Sculptures by Rachel Whiteread and George Stoll
by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp**

After filling the Tate Modern's gargantuan Turbine Hall in 2005 with random stacks of rectilinear forms cast from packing boxes, the British artist Rachel Whiteread wanted to pursue works with greater potential for intimacy. And in her first show in Los Angeles, on view at Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills, she does evoke a certain poignancy. In the high-ceilinged central space of the Richard Meier-designed gallery, she has placed three lithesome works, each using the spare steel support of a modern stacking chair as its base, combined with pastel-colored cast-plaster shapes, notably various-sized cylinders and home-base-shaped slabs.

In two works, Whiteread's nonfunctional chairs sit normally, and hold cylinders (cast from cardboard shipping tubes) placed where the seat would be. The sculptures look vaguely functional but deny utility. Another work, titled *Tumble*, features two chairs, one with cylinders where the seat should be and another that is upended with the cylinders lodged between its tubular steel legs. Still another work is titled *Sit*, though sitting is not really possible, since a stack of pale plaster blocks is placed on the seat.

Whiteread excels in combining formal simplicity with metaphorical punch. Those qualities are even more evident in the wall works, shelves that bear blocks, cylinders and spheres of colored plaster, wood, and metal. Cast from toilet paper rolls and cardboard boxes, they recall immediately Giorgio Morandi's paintings of humble objects. Whiteread trained as a painter before turning to her well-known sculptures of vacant space. Her signature sense of absence is not physically a part of the new works, but these 3D nature mortes do convey a poetic sense of loss.

In Gagosian's upstairs gallery, the star work is *Ghost, Ghost*, a translucent gray resin cast of a Victorian doll house. A viewer can barely discern the domestic details of stairways and doors, and the shimmering form suggests nothing so much as a memory made physical. Still rigorously formal in her interests, Whiteread says nothing directly about the recent death of her mother, who was also an artist, and the subsequent process of packing up the leftovers of a human life. But she doesn't need to.

In Whiteread's show, 18 multicolored cylinders cast from toilet paper rolls are lined on a single white shelf. In George Stoll's show at the Kim Light Gallery, a selection of multicolored beeswax and paraffin tumblers copied from Tupperware are displayed in an elaborate, multilevel white cabinet of minimalist design. While quite different in some ways, both works are concerned with the resonance of the humble objects of daily life.

Stoll inverts the usual hierarchies of production by painstakingly recreating by hand that which often exists in mass-production. His *Untitled (43 Tumblers in a Holiday Arrangement)* can be viewed from two sides, and in one view, the tumblers are hidden behind a white silhouette that suggests an urban cityscape, with glimpses of the tumblers visible through small openings, like light reflected through buildings windows. Stoll based the placement of the windows on a photograph of Christmas lights. An entire gallery wall holds a series of precise mechanical drawings with the same colored circles of light contained in architectural plans for the Pantheon, St. Ivo and other favorite works of Roman architecture.

Stoll went to Rome regularly for 25 years before winning the Prix de Rome, and his show is filled with reminiscence and longing. While ensconced in his large empty studio there, he started collecting an unusual Italian toy, a squeezable white rubber breast-ball, complete with lifelike nipple. After Stoll had filled an entire bowl with them, he decided to recreate the image in plaster. A large sculpture in the show includes two bowls of breasts, the nipples turning from pink to green, a reference to Bernini's *Daphne and Apollo*. (The choice of materials, however, is in homage to Bernini's rival architect, Borromini, who used plaster and gesso in buildings like St. Ivo.)

Another pair of breasts rests on a plate, in the style of depictions of the Catholic martyr St. Agatha, but most of the breasts function as unspecified *ex votos*, along with ears, noses and numerous polished bones resting on platters or recessed into a niches in the gallery wall. Some are accompanied by skulls. They recall the capuchin monks' catacombs in Rome, where skeletal remains are embedded in the archways and walls along with the admonition that viewers one day will be that which they are viewing. Stoll, however, modeled his plaster bones after the Flintstone props from a Hollywood costume shop. His sister, Mink Stoll, was a regular in the John Waters movies and his work often underscores the ways that fantasy intersects with the concepts if not the facts of history. Yet, like Whiteread's works, Stoll's memento mori are both heartfelt and humorous.

KIM LIGHT
2656 S. LA CIENEGA BLVD
LOS ANGELES, CA 90034
T 310.559.1111 F 310.559.2911
info@kimlightgallery.com
www.kimlightgallery.com

LIGHTBOX

Los Angeles Times CALENDAR

Friday, December 26, 2008



George Stoll Untitled (43 tumblers in a holiday arrangement) [Detail of reverse view] 2008
Beeswax, parafin, and pigment on a painted wooden shelf and painted wooden pedestal
74 x 100 x 12 inches

George Stoll at Kim Light/LightBox by Christopher Knight

Made from wax, a hand-cast sculpture of a plastic drinking glass by George Stoll is an incredible simulation — a synthetic cup that isn't plastic; a machine-made form that is not pristine but instead betrays the idiosyncrasy of the hand; and an object whose color, never quite saturated, seems to be leaching out, like a face going pale. Dusty doppelgängers, his vessels look exactly like the real thing, except not quite.

A peculiar new Stoll sculpture at Kim Light Gallery multiplies what could be called “the strangeness of banality” in his earlier art, which in addition to cups has also focused on sponges, toilet paper rolls, soap bars and other familiardomestic items. “Untitled (43 tumblers in a holiday arrangement)” is a virtual village of beeswax and paraffin drinking vessels, each occupying an individual niche in a large wood shelf atop a pedestal.

You don't see the tumblers, however, unless you walk around to the back of the tall shelf. (It's just over 6 feet tall and 8 feet wide.) Approached from the front, the back-lighted shelf at first appears blank.

It has a stepped, rectilinear contour that recalls a city skyline. Small holes drilled into its face show tiny colored spots, like a randomly lighted pattern of apartment and office windows in urban buildings crossed with stars in a night sky. The colors turn out to be made by the multicolored tumblers on the other side.

The ensemble is like an eccentric church altarpiece crossed with a reliquary — an impression enhanced by a second group of works in an adjacent room. Bones and skulls made from gessoed plaster are arrayed on pedestals and embedded into wall niches. Stacked Halloween-pumpkin baskets underscore the elemental paganism that lurks beneath most religious feeling, while bowls overflowing with female breast forms — dotted with pastel-colored nipples — provide a disconcerting note of nurturance.

KIM LIGHT
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LOS ANGELES, CA 90034
T 310.559.1111 F 310.559.2911
info@kimlightgallery.com
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Stoll's ode to the traditional Baroque theme of vanitas, or the fragile transience of life and death's inevitability, gets under your skin. The sculptural forms are covered over with gesso, a thick and powdery white liquid traditionally used to prepare wood panels or sculptures for painting. Stoll mostly leaves the paint off, which means the soft, chalky contours of the gesso coating yield a melting, marshmallowy appearance. It's as if these strange modern relics were disappearing before your eyes.

Hamptons 2006
artnet.com: "Scope Hampered?"
by Ben Davis
Date Published: July 16 2006



Work by George Stoll at Lightbox

"Elsewhere, a decorative kind of post-minimalism played on the posh beach resort esthetic, as in the work of George Stoll at L.A.'s Lightbox. Stoll offered a shelf of what appeared to be plastic cups, arraigned by color. On closer look, the pieces are made of molded wax, cast from common Tupperware, given a jittery, hand-crafted look. The set was \$18,000."