



ART FIRST PROJECTS

ROBERT RUSH

29 March – 12 May 2012

Robert Rush draws, paints, sculpts, moulds, embellishes, mashes and obliterates. He does this in a manner that is both deft and cack-handed. Rush invests in a language of pictorial and material motifs conjuring a kit of parts upon which exultations and abuses might be enacted. Where before the emerging motifs might have been an abstract design or gestural flourish, now we find a nose, a sausage or a plant. And so with these figurative elements, characters emerge. Here comes one now. It's Mr Death. Sss! Booo! Fuck You, Mr Death!

We also see odd, composite human figures. They are not so much androgynous as indeterminate, shifting between the sexes with a mixture of fluidity and clumsiness, zest and exhaustion. A chest of breasts leads to a Popeye arm or Homer paw, with below one she-leg and the other a he-pin. The whole body awkwardly poised between glorious vogue and doomed flapping.

Mr Death glares up at us, having been shaped as he took shape, his horns like clumsy skeletal fingers reaching to clutch a mortal head and wrest it from the land of the living. Rush wrestles his motifs from the land of the doodling and the idling away of precious time, maintaining the improvisatory and slapdash throughout further, more forceful and meticulous processes, leading to results that evidence these dealings while containing the enigma of the whole.

The propositional nature of Rush's sculpture is made definite, confrontational even, when now we are faced with a bronze. Weight-gain not only in material but also in idea and gambit. Mr Death emerges from the flimsy, provisional and precarious thicket of anthropomorphized plants, altars and inorganic foliage, with a low rumble increasing in volume, a leaden figure set to act upon you yet himself a thing of time risen from the furnace, obliged to work with what he himself has been given. He may mock our inability to avoid his ever-nearing grasp, yet that does not mean we cannot jeer at his strange clunky form as an evolutionary misstep or demonic dead-end dooming him to a never-ending quest of taking lives and claiming souls.

Tom Mason, London February 2012

Robert Rush (born 1978) studied at Central St Martins and the Royal Academy Schools (1999–2006). He was included in the 2006 Bloomberg New Contemporaries, the 2008 John Moores 25 at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool and the 2009 Jerwood Contemporary Painters.

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