

Flash Art

R E V I E W S

Richard Hughes

Anton Kern



RICHARD HUGHES, *Crash My Party You Bastards*, 2004. Mixed media, dimensions variable. Courtesy Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

London-based Richard Hughes's first solo show in the US amply demonstrates the fruitful marriage between material fabrication and poetic nuance. One relies on the other to effectively articulate eloquent tableaux barbed with rakish humor. The mainly sculptural works cast a net around junk yard detritus — a bike tire, an old Nike Air shoe, buckets, building site kick-boards, a moss ridden mattress with mushrooms growing out of it, old planting pots (that are also skulls), a broken bit of stone wall recreated in marble that is cracked in such a way to reveal the word: LSD. What Hughes does particularly well is to suspend objects in the process of decay — celebrating the inevitable while simultaneously using artifice to counter its uncontested dominion. Almost all of the works are hyperrealist simulacra made out of Jesomite and resin. There's an underbelly to Hughes's oeuvre that speaks of late nights in abandoned buildings and excessive inebriation — something undeniably youthful and underground in his deliberate selection of objects that, seen together, operate in a codified language of resistance. Although many of the works contain actual hidden messages (words sewn in to the dirty comforter of *Slouching Back* (2004) or old skateboard graphics formed in buckets) the formal qualities and position of challenging the innate hierarchy of objects deemed worthy of sculptural representation, are the decisive aspects.

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