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## Plastic Casters

by Rupert Goldsworthy



Nic Arbatsky  
Tinder 6 (orange)  
1997



Rachel Harrison  
What would it be like to be Imelda  
Marcos  
1996-99



Donald Moffett  
Lot 020396  
1996

New York's meat-packing district, located at the south border of the Chelsea art neighborhood, provides an uncanny echo of Damien Hirst's notorious proposition of pickled livestock as art. But visitors crossing West 14th Street leave the smell of dead meat for the classy-looking storefront of Patrick Callery's new gallery space.

Callery is something of a live wire in the New York scene. At one point a curator for the Fisher Landau Foundation, then partner with dealer Marianne Boesky, Callery has most recently been escorting nascent art collector Leonardo diCaprio through the Chelsea galleries.

For his inaugural exhibition, Callery presented a smart, up-to-the-moment group show entitled "Monochrome." The five works appear to have been made by machine rather than by hand, and cast in resin or coated with plastic or extruded from plastic goop -- even when in fact they're made from oil paint or papier mâché.

In the center of the space was a small pile of fireplace logs cast in fluorescent orange resin by New York artist Nic Arbatsky. To the left was a powder-blue shapeless slag-pile wall sculpture by Rachel Harrison with a photo set into it like a avant-garde novelty frame. To the right was Brit Don Brown's Pepto Bismol-colored, half-life-size cast portrait of himself, standing on a plinth and looking all cool in aviator sunglasses (also plastic). In the back corner were two dark gray paintings by Donald Moffett, which appear to have been generated from oil paint using a cake-decorating tool in an uncanny homage to AstroTurf.

The vision here is of art as pristine and utterly synthetic, the "commodity fetish" entirely fabricated in plastic. The esthetic of "Monochrome" seems to be extremely clinically cool. The works in the show have a weightlessness, displacement and automatism. Perhaps the most intriguing pieces are Arbatsky's surreal log fire and Moffett's machine-like paintings. For Moffett, the former Gran Fury AIDS activist and graphic designer for Bureau (his most recent gig was the award-winning titles for *Velvet Goldmine*), this return to exhibiting is unexpected and interesting.

"Monochrome," Mar. 25-Apr. 24, 1999, was the debut exhibition at Patrick Callery, 433 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

RUPERT GOLDSWORTHY operates a gallery on West 17th Street.