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Snap Reviews

# Tim Hawkinson at DENK Gallery

March 6, 2019 Text by Matt Stromberg



Tim Hawkinson, *Orrery* (2018). Epoxy, fiberglass, urethane foam, motorized, 70 x 21 x 28 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and DENK Gallery. Photo: Chaoyi (Stormy) Wu

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“Unmonumental” is the first word that Tim Hawkinson’s recent work brings to mind. The works in his solo show at DENK Gallery range from table-top sculptures to large-scale constructions, all united in their scrappy, often humorous, transformations of everyday and industrial materials and the moments of revelatory wonder they are capable of creating. Unlike other contemporary artists like B. Wurtz who mine the mundane, Hawkinson’s DIY works enter into a dialogue with classical sculpture that is both subversive and aspirational.

Bags, cans, and other forms of packaging serve as raw material for several sculptures. *Double bag torso* (2019) is just that: a white plastic True Value shopping bag stretched over a brown paper sack to resemble a body sporting a tank top and underwear. It’s an economical, anatomical one-liner that turns a trip to the corner store into an homage to antiquity.

The body is prime source material for Hawkinson, who presents it in unconventional ways as a form of self-portraiture. For *Sock drawer* (2019), he photographed the opening of a sock rotated at various angles, then arranged the images in a honeycomb pattern radiating out from dark to light—an accessible, bedroom minimalism. For the sculpture *Tapered self portrait* (2019), Hawkinson took casts of various parts of his body—head, knee, toe, and uvula—and stacked them in size order, producing a grotesque yet intimate likeness.

At times, Hawkinson’s quirkiness undercuts his focus on corporeal awkwardness, as with *Bunny pants* (2018), a rabbit form made out of foam urethane stuffed jeans that is amusing, but little more. (Sarah Lucas’ stocking sculptures made 20 years ago were far more unsettling). Overall, Hawkinson is at his best working at the far poles of the spectrum between scale and ambition, an uncanny fusion that encompasses everything from the slapdash and visceral to the more elaborate and theatrical. For instance, *Orrery* (2018), a fiberglass and urethane sculpture of the Virgin or perhaps a saint cradling a mechanically-rotating baby in oversized, claw-like hands that spring directly from her chest. Behind her, a blue tarp pulled taut by a vacuum pump mimics a classic sculptural niche. Taking its name from a mechanical model of the solar system, the work makes a case for a kind of awe—spiritual, scientific, and aesthetic—achieved through the commonplace and mass-produced as opposed to the rarified and extraordinary.

Tim Hawkinson: *New Works* runs from February 14–March 30, 2019 at DENK Gallery (749 East Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012).