AN INFLATIONARY THEORY OF THE HEART

What you see here - this group of large and apparently disparate constructions - represents, in terms of Brandon McGahey’s work, a wild expansion of concern. I’m thinking something like that moment theoretical physicists imagine after the cosmological start of things when it all blew up again. The primordial vinegar and baking soda somehow came together to inflate the dense imponderable into stuff we understand.

Or, insofar as all this only just erupted from McGahey’s ceramics practice (mostly vessels), it’s the genie out of the bottle. Something happened. An emotional something - deep and revelatory, not to be examined here. Just call it vinegar and baking soda. Whoomp. Let’s also call it to the credit of advisors who were able to appreciate and encourage this event.

So here’s “Two Figures,” an immense expanded foam and painted papier mache enlargement of a childhood sculpture of the 8 year old McGahey in his grandfather's lap - so remarkably kept for all these years and whose importance, deep importance, only lately came to light. How do you scale a thing, inflate a thing like that? And not slip into easy irony, condescension. Well, you have to do it straight. Like this. The hardest thing of all. You be the child again. But hugely. Every hugely thoughtless sculptural/painterly move. My God, just look at that mustache.

And “Boy” - a very different run back into history, fraught and personal. In this case he’s a digital enlargement of another fading memento - a nineteenth century porcelain figure: Boy with ball. So lose the ball and then inflate into a life-size generality - a principle of boyhood apprehending something. Something whose significance eludes and yet seems threatening. A gathering of brightly colored walking sticks. Like weapons. What the hell? We do not know. We may not even want to know. But what we do not know is genuine - a mystery.

“Ranch Water Fountain” seems an excursion. And it was - a trip to Marfa. To the desert, thoughts of Donald Judd. Of water and tequila which pours forth from welded irrigation pipe like inspiration - out of nowhere. Out of the desert. Out of the bottle. Out of some dark and explosive computation of the heart.

David Searcy
1-26-20
TITLE
TWO FIGURES

MEDIUM
PAPIER-MÂCHÉ

YEAR
2004

SIZE
8" X 6" X 6"
TITLE: OSB BEND

MEDIUM
ORIENTED STRAND BOARD
STEEL, ENAMEL

YEAR
2019

SIZE
12” X 22” X 54”
DIVISION OF ART M.F.A. QUALIFYING EXHIBITION

MARCH 28 – APRIL 18, 2020

This 2020 M.F.A. thesis exhibition is the culmination of two years of intensive work by M.F.A. candidates in the Division of Art and feature works in a wide-ranging variety of styles and mediums.

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