

ELIZABETH KING: THE SIZES OF THINGS IN THE MIND'S EYE

David Winton Bell Gallery
List Art Center
Brown University
64 College Street
Providence, Rhode Island

November 1 through December 21

LIGHT MOVES GENTLY OVER ELIZABETH KING'S SELF-PORTRAIT AUTOMATON IN "EIDOLON," A LARGER THAN LIFE VIDEO PROJECTION ON THE DARKENED GALLERY WALL. POSSESSING THE CAREWORN WRINKLES OF TIME, HER INDIVIDUAL EYEBROW HAIRS GONE AWRY, THE CLOSE-CROPPED SUBJECT GAZES OFF-SCREEN WITH AN AIR OF VAGUE CONCERN. SLOWLY, SHE TURNS HER LIQUID STARE TOWARDS THE VIEWER. THE MOMENT OF EYE CONTACT IS ANTICIPATED, THAT FLASHPOINT WHERE HUMAN RECOGNITION OCCURS THROUGH THE "WINDOWS OF THE SOUL"...BUT SOMETHING IS NOT QUITE RIGHT.

As the light shifts to illuminate the subject's eyes, wide and misleadingly lifelike, the pupils remained fixed - frozen apertures within unseeing glass orbs. In that moment, the viewer is reminded that this implied human presence is merely an image of a carefully manipulated puppet, created with light projected onto a wall.

In the visual chaos of our everyday human experience, we are confronted with the artificiality of our perceptive powers with each bit of information that our brains process. Through art, religion and science, we seek answers to the age-old question: "What makes us human?" Our opposable thumbs? The power inherent in our hands to sculpt, to take apart...giving us the ability to create objects after our own image?

"The Sizes of Things in the Mind's Eye," a traveling exhibition curated by Ashley Kistler and organized by the Visual Arts Center of Richmond, is the first career survey of the multi-faceted work of sculptor Elizabeth King. Fascinated with the poetic intersection of portraiture, time and scale, King

bridges her dedicated pursuit of dimensional realism with new media, to set up unique perceptual situations that encourage lapses of reality.

In fact, there are so many forces at play in King's work, that as a viewer, it's best to succumb to the simplest vehicles of curiosity and observation.

To that end, the first gallery offers a marvelous display of reference objects and studies, borrowed from the artist's own studio. An impressive collection of false eyes rambles among antique mannequins and life casts. It's as if a Victorian house of curiosities has landed in the artist's 21st century workshop. King is a careful disciple of the mechanics of the human body, and has assembled and relied on this collection to inform her own methodology, documented in several videos also on display.

With the precision of a surgeon, King adapts time-honored disciplines of modeling and carving to create half-sized models of truncated heads and body parts, realized in fine porcelain, wood

and bronze. Wearing a surgeon's loupe, she meticulously works from the inside out, and vice versa, leaving the backs of her sculptures' heads open to expose the mechanics inside, as in "Pupil," which also sports a door in its back.

In the process of King's purposeful editing, exquisite details like individually set, real eyebrow hairs counterbalance the spooky lack of pores on the porcelain "skin" of "Untitled" (the physical presence behind the aforementioned video installation, "Eidolon").

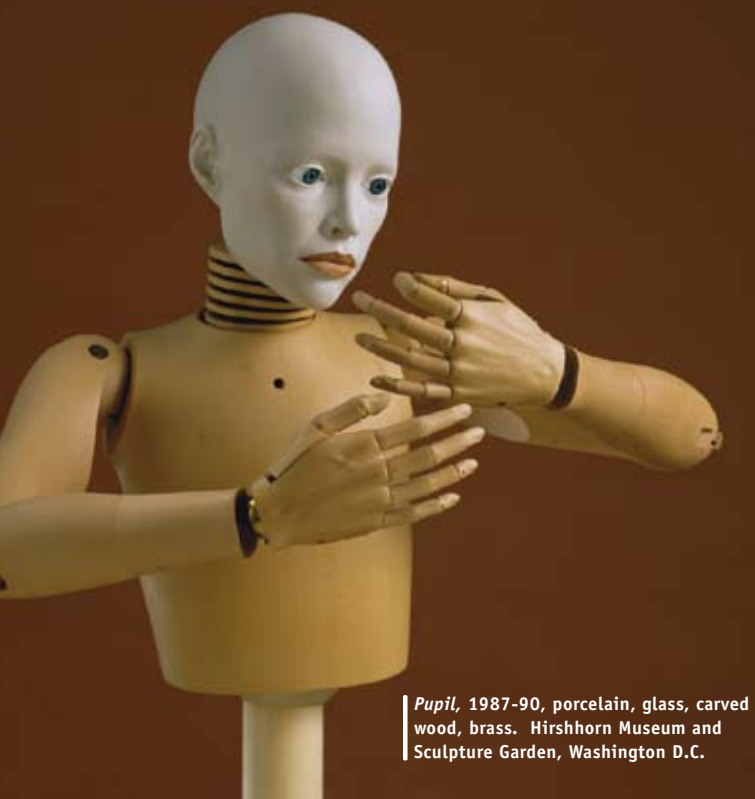
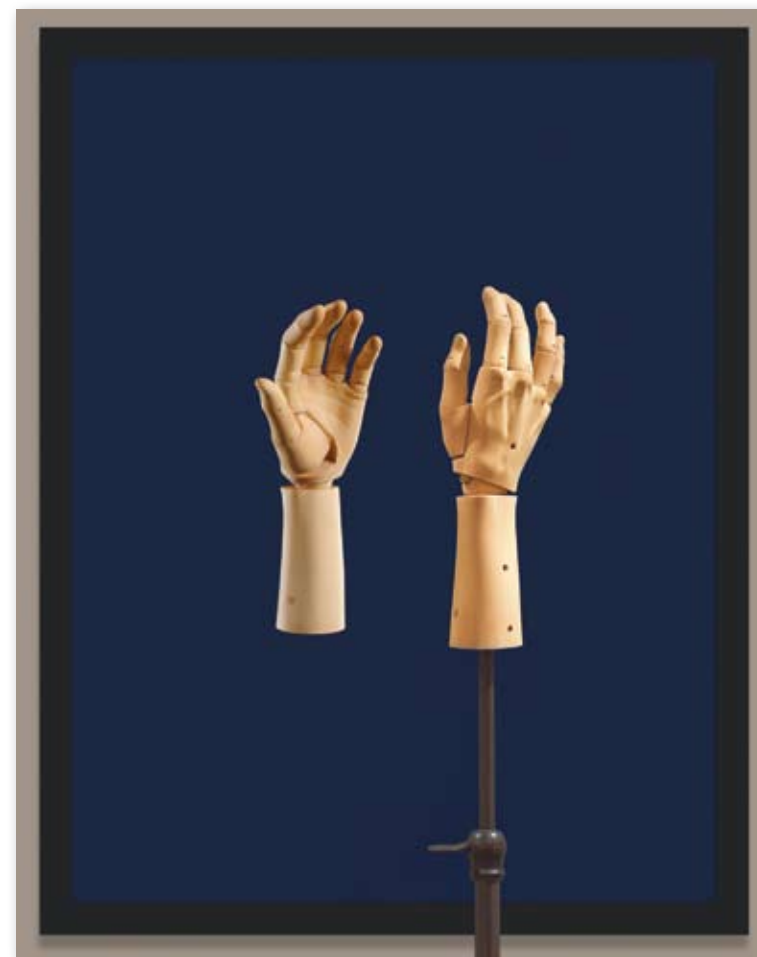
Through this process of editing, King, in a podcast interview, refers to the ancient tradition of theatre, by which an audience can be transfixed through "slight of hand, which is sometimes very low tech." By exploring the evocative

potential of her automatons through still photography and animation, King employs time and lighting to create a theatrical space beyond mere mastery of the object.

In "Bartlett's Hand," an articulated wooden hand is mounted mute, in line with a video of itself. The video twin, in motion, gestures at its silent counterpart. Faced with all of the potential harbored within the human hand, these works cannot help but raise the question of how far we should extend it in the creation of life beyond our basic biological imperative.

Meredith Cutler

RIGHT: Bartlett's Hand, 2005, sculpture and film installation. Collection of Karen and Robert Duncan, Nebraska.



Pupil, 1987-90, porcelain, glass, carved wood, brass. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.

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