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were asked to admire the canniness of the usage, and we did; but some transformations were more profound than others. Chakaia Booker remained faithful to her rubber tires, creating another bold, bristling wall abstraction that channeled the power of ritualistic objects. Long-Bin Chen continued with his sculpted heads of Buddha and the goddess Guanyin carved from telephone directories and auction catalogues.

Subodh Gupta's semi-spherical wall piece of tin pots, a staple of Indian life, was emotionally resonant but visually unremarkable. Paul Villinski's signature butterflies cut from vinyl records had a retro-loveliness, spreading across the wall like musical notes or a bevy of memories, as if released by the record player below. Another vinyl record piece, Jean Shin's slightly ominous *Sound Wave*, offered a tall, freestanding, three-dimensional ver-

sion of Hokusai's famous woodcut. Yuken Teruya's delicate, diminutive trees cut from designer shopping bags were, as always, irresistible—the message encoded in the medium. And El Anatsui was represented by another of his glimmering tapestries made out of liquor bottle caps and thin wire.

Entertaining, often pleasing to look at, even provocative at times, "Second Lives" might have included more unusual suspects like Michael Rakowitz and his version of the missing artifacts from the National Museum of Iraq made from Middle Eastern packaging and newspapers, an absurdist take on life, war, and the value of art. One might also question the environmental friendliness of some works, since they consume an inordinate amount of material that didn't seem to be recycled at all—except conceptually. Geared toward a general audience, "Second Lives" was ultimately a crowd-pleaser rather than a sustained investigation of a vital issue. As such, it was also a missed opportunity.

—Lilly Wei

SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK

Dean Snyder

Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College

Dean Snyder's brightly colored works are a stark departure from his earlier constructions of leather, tree branches, and annotative drawings. In "Almost Blue," he abandoned organic materials for polymers, synthetic resins, and high-gloss hot-rod paint. This "garage technology," as Snyder terms it, imposed labor-intensive processes on the formation of his playful new sculptures, including shaping Styrofoam, laminating fiberglass, and applying epoxy gel and automotive paint laced with flaked metal glitter. For each piece, the application of paint alone—multiple layers of primer, base coat, top coat, and clear coat, each cured and meticulously sanded—occupied some three days' work.

The result: "kandy-kolored" skins of yellows, reds, and greens on biomorphic forms that combine animal, vegetable, and mineral. In one, a dead tree limb sprouts from an enormous

Above: Installation view of "Second Lives," with (left to right) Susie MacMurray, *Frailties*, 2004, and Pablo Reinoso, *Spiralthonet*, 2008. Below and detail: Dean Snyder, *Almost Blue*, 2008. Cast optical resin and urethane auto enamel over epoxy and carbon fiber, 8.5 x 128 x 58 in.



polyp. Another resembles a chunk of space rock dripping intergalactic gore. Though functioning as discrete pieces, the nine works were displayed as an ensemble, like some trippy bestiary or garden of other-earthly delights, punctuated with dollops of eros. A funhouse note was added by a giant, stainless-steel cobweb hung in a corner of the entrance, fair warning to all who entered. Inside, with walls painted cave-brown, the sculptures were presented in tight pools of light, like celebrities in a supernatural cabinet of wonder.

The pantomime strangeness of the objects gains deeper meaning through Snyder's titles, which fuse whimsy with classical mythopoetics. The eight-foot *Nepenthe*, a variegated yellow-red tuber with a black snaky stem that terminates in a gaping, acid-green pitcher plant flower, is named for the genus of carnivorous plant and for a Homeric drug that makes the user forget sorrow. *Amnesia* is a puddle of orange ooze sprouting a crop of glassy-eyed, Lucy-in-the-Sky poppies. And Snyder reinterprets *Khronos*, the Greek creator of the universe, as a glittering nugget with a crust that shifts color from orange to yellow, broken at one end to reveal a glistening, meat-red core.

Almost Blue presents another oozy pool, this time recalling the gassy surface of a geothermal spring. Bubbles frozen in mid-burst and the symmetrical bloom of droplets exploding on impact echo stop-action photography, recalling Snyder's artistic origins as a photographer; similarly, the work's resemblance to the messy flop of a cow pie evokes his childhood on a Pennsylvania farm and adds to the work's biographical allusions. A sense of memoir pervaded the installation, from the humid immediacy of rural life to the carnival dream of the Jersey Shore, where Snyder summ-
 ered as a boy. In this regard, his new sculptures are no departure, but a continuation of his previous

work: meditations on influences that go back to his source, and on the rewards of not fully growing up.

—Timothy Cahill

TORONTO

Vanessa Paschakarnis

Alison Smith Gallery

I first encountered Vanessa Paschakarnis's work when she came to study at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University in the early '90s. Her methodology was highly refined, and she worked tirelessly at large-scale plaster casts, graphite drawings, and ambitious stone carvings. The work read and continues to read, for me, as simultaneously optimistic and subtly doleful.

In her recent exhibition, domestic-sized marble carvings sat atop appropriately innocuous bases. Parallel white walls running the length of the gallery displayed several large- and small-scale drawings, punctuated by evocative intaglio prints. Overhead, stainless steel 10-gauge aircraft cable suspended contorted cast bronze enclosures. "Domesticated Beasts," the show's title, suggested the notion of servitude, together with an attendant uneasiness.

Standing on the sidewalk, directly facing the glass-fronted gallery, viewer could clearly see *Horned Being (Pan)*, a variegated, carved stone with cow-like, protruding bronze horns, sitting atop a bolted, multi-timbered plinth. Encountering this object inside, one became aware of the incised lines and divots that scar the otherwise smooth, serpentine stone head. The substantial bronze horns appear to hold the energy that has departed from the being itself.

Three additional carved marble heads complete this set of beasts. All are quite geometric in form and soft pink in color, except for *Horse with Colors*, whose variegation displays sienna and gray streaks on a pinkish-white field. Like *Horned Being*, the cat, cow, and horse have scars by way of incised markings, but they

are more the scars of a life fulfilled than of a life damaged. The titles of another group, *Blue Bell*, *Blue Echo*, and *Shadows for Bells*, are whimsical; the sculptures are not. *Blue Bell*, for example, seems rigidly fabric-like from one vantage point then curiously assumes the form of a rudimentary helmet. Paschakarnis's bells do not contain "tongues," nor are there implements available to strike

twice the size of a human head, are singularly pinned (back-to-back) to a six-foot-high metal mast. The carving implies that each form was developed from the same piece of marble. The more convex of the two faces displays aggressive pock marks on an otherwise smooth surface. A mouth seems to gape toward the ceiling. Opposite, a second face projects, its mouth continuing on to describe



Vanessa Paschakarnis, *Horse with Colors*, 2008. Portuguese marble and steel, 20 x 14 x 24 in.

them. A ringing bell is a summons, a calling, and an announcement; when intentionally silenced, it denotes censure, oppression, and sadness. *Blue Echo*, a suspended bronze saddle-like shape, could be the hide from one of the marble animal heads. It describes a form no longer present and, when struck with the hand, sounds sadly hollow. *Shadows for Bells*, cable-suspended, cast bronze sculptures with a soft brown patina, are reminiscent of the eviscerated deer carcasses sometimes found in the deep woods.

In *Two-Faced Individual*, two elongated marble carvings, each roughly

what might be a throat. It appears incapable of taking nourishment, while the other waits, like a baby bird, to be fed.

This dialectic within Paschakarnis's work creates and maintains tension. Many of her sculptures bring the viewer to consider notions of separation, reconciliation, absence, and concordance. Paschakarnis is developing a lexicon for describing that which is not visible, and, in doing so, she moves toward a higher level of consciousness. It is, after all, the space in between that offers potential for insight and awareness.

—Dennis Gill