




Rebecca Ripple practices a kind of bricolage sculpture – assembling her structures from an emphatically, even aggressively, varied selection of materials – with engaging élan and self-possession. Investing her hybridized objects with symbolic resonance, Ripple formulates them to act as complex structures whose formal intricacies suspend between entireties and sums of parts. Every element is evident, but all elements congeal into a coherent composition, or at least evocative presence. The group of sculptures shown here, along with numerous apparently preparatory drawings, frequently reference Jesus in ways at once blasphemous and reverent. But the work does not evince religious, or for that matter iconoclastic, meaning so much as it struggles to achieve a powerful iconicity – an iconicity made more powerful by the interpretive traps Ripple sets for herself and, by extension, us. She is not referencing votives, saintly statuary, or even church architecture, but strives for the mute eloquence – the power to embody – such ecclesiastic artifacts convey. When you ignore their parts, Ripple’s assemblages do manifest a lot of this persuasive force through their sheer drawing-in-space finesse. But you can’t ignore those parts for long, bringing you back to “earth” – and revealing spirituality in the very dialogue between abstract form and concrete object. (Gallery KM, 2903 Santa Monica Blvd., S. Monica; closed. www.gallerykmla.com)

– Peter Frank

REBECCA RIPPLE, Medusa of Suburbia, 2012, Plastic, aluminum, wood, tape, hair, fluorescent light, 60 x 60 x 36 inches

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