

PROFILE

{ CHRISTINA WEST }



Exhibition

What a Doll: The Human Object as Toy

*On view through August 28th at the
Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville*

www.mocajacksonville.org

CHRISTINA WEST IS AN AVID people watcher with a dry sense of humor, active imagination and an innate impulse to create with her hands. If you meet her and she stares at you a bit too long, she's probably just picturing you naked. "My work gives me permission to stare," says West, "We are told not to stare because the act is rude. It might make someone else, the one upon which our gaze is fixed, feel uncomfortable. So we steal glimpses, don't let our eyes linger too long, pretend not to see, and are encouraged to retreat within ourselves. But the moments when I am compelled to stare, are the moments when I feel most alive. My curiosity, awe, and questioning make me alert. The stare signals an intense engagement with a reality outside of myself."

Working exclusively with the figure, West is known for her arrangements of mostly nude and slightly smaller than life-size sculptures, which create visual stories in space that walk the line between pleasure and pain. What results are stirring psychological scenarios about the com-

plexity of being human.

For her exhibition, *What a Doll: The Human Object as Toy*, West addresses the idea of the human object as toy with nearly life-size porcelain and fabric "dolls" created with surprising anatomic specificity. Draped, hung and piled within the room, the doll-like figures transform



*Christina's work
EXPLORES the
complexity of
BEING HUMAN.*

the space from a gallery to a place of unsettling, interrupted play. Rich with metaphor, West's work invites associations of childhood, sexuality and the vulnerability of the body, allowing viewers to apply their own personal narratives to an emotionally charged sculptural tableau.

"My sculptures do not provide answers or assertions, but embrace uncertainty through the provocation of more questions," the artist explained, "The figures are permanently frozen mid-gesture in a moment that encourages the generation of ambiguous narratives. Stripped from the context

of previous actions, the figures' personalities, motives and intentions are malleable and unfixed in the viewers' minds. Who they are is in a state of flux dependent on the stories viewers create."

West maintains her studio in Atlanta, GA where she is an assistant professor of ceramics at Georgia State University.

She received her MFA from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University and her BFA from Siena Heights University in Adrian, MI. West has received numerous grants and fellowships from such organizations as the Archie Bray Foundation for Ceramic Arts, MT;

Mary L. Nohl Fund, WI; New York Foundation for the Arts; and Southeastern College Art Conference, NC. Her work has been exhibited at The Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, West Tampa Center for the Arts and Mindy Solomon Gallery, St. Petersburg. **ON VIEW**



OPPOSITE PAGE AND ABOVE:
WORKS FROM THE EXHIBITION
*WHAT A DOLL: THE HUMAN
OBJECT AS TOY*, 2010, GLAZED
CERAMIC AND STUFFED FABRIC

LEFT:
THE ARTIST AT WORK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY COLIN CONCES