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With these Evan Holloway sculptures, the possibilities are almost infinite

By David Pagel | February 24, 2016



"Benzoin" by Evan Holloway, 2015, fiberglass, epoxy resin, talc, benzoin incense stick.

At a time when too much half-baked art takes itself too seriously, it's refreshing to see some serious art behaving as if it's half-baked. The relationship between brains and gags takes smart shape in Evan Holloway's six sculptures at David Kordansky Gallery.

Holloway's robust understanding of comedy outdistances the snarky defensiveness and sophomore snottiness that usually define art humor. The funny business begins with "Benzoin," a gigantic infinity symbol to which Holloway has added a couple of twists. The first turns the figure-eight symbol in a triple loop-the-loop. The second turns the massive fiberglass and epoxy resin abstraction into a Brobdingnagian incense burner.

Both transformations make a pretzel of logic, particularly as it applies to modern sculpture's history. In the middle of the 20th century, sculpture kicked out pedestals and bases so that viewers might directly interact with the art. With "Benzoin," Holloway turns an 11-foot-long sculpture into a pedestal for a single stick of burning incense, whose scent fills a lot more volume than its weighty base. To ensure that it all makes sense — or something like sense — Holloway has crafted his sculpture out of the same material in incense: benzoin.

The other five sculptures make your body move one way while your mind goes another. The path memories take and the direction in which your imagination travels expand the possibilities, perhaps infinitely. A swarm of 40 elongated faces, suspended from the ceiling, out-Giacomettis Alberto Giacometti. To stand under Holloway's "In the Column" is to feel as if you are being addressed by God. The experience also recalls visits to Bruce Nauman exhibitions. That's how Holloway's humor works: deepening experiences and making the present more resonant.

In all of his sculptures, what seem to be non-sequiturs turn out to be time-delayed insights. In one, spines, seaweed and spent batteries cross paths. In others, a tree gets rearranged into a 3-D flow chart, a totem pole does double duty as a lamp and two dysfunction lamps shed metaphoric light on overlooked relationships among home décor, theatric props and installation art.

By letting visitors in on the fun, Holloway's delightfully cockeyed approach to sculpture saves seriousness from itself — and saves all of us from sanctimony.

David Kordansky Gallery, 5130 W. Edgewood Place, Los Angeles, (323) 935-3030, through March 26. Closed Sundays and Mondays.
davidkordanskygallery.com