

REVIEWS

Ross Knight

TEAM GALLERY

If you've ever wondered what it would be like to heat-seal a giant sheet of industrial plastic around something other than a dry-docked boat, Ross Knight's sculpture *Part*, 2012, is an intriguing case. At over eight feet high, *Part* is a mysterious object whose armature creates protuberances in the opaque plastic shrink wrap that envelops its upper half. Stemlike metal legs painted an alarming hue of fuchsia protrude

from the base and attach to unpainted threaded steel posts, while two rods of red wheeled casters in blue plastic tracks (such as those used to scoot boxes down conveyor belts) project from the sculpture at a perpendicular angle parallel to the floor, as if waiting for the main portion of *Part* to be uncovered so as to begin operation. Like an updated version of Man Ray's felt- and string-wrapped bundle *The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse*, 1920, the object hidden in plain sight piques curiosity and makes for prying spectators. I found myself peeking into the hollows and crevices the plastic created, trying to discover the secret of its inner appearance.

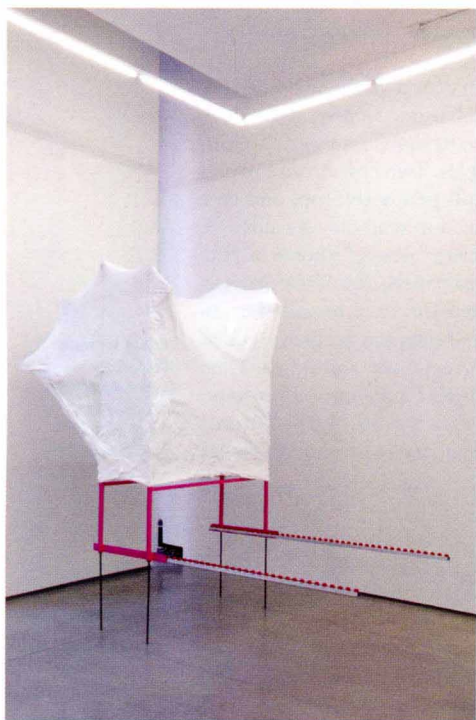
"Misusing" industrial materials, as Knight puts it, is the show's central gambit. In *Cord*, 2011, a two-inch-thick block of luminous, white, marblelike polyethylene, the same material that is usually extruded into plastic grocery bags, is draped with a cast of the kind of silicone used for artificial limbs. The flesh-colored cast appears simultaneously breastlike (on its ends) and phal-

lic (in its length) due to its being pulled taut by waxed twine tied to its two extremities. The pieces of twine are affixed on their lower ends to two rusty iron ballasts formerly used as elevator counterweights—one an obelisk shape, the other broken in half. The entire contraption is suspended on a wood sawhorse painted acid yellow. *Cord* is both delicately equipoised and ungainly, as though arrested in some moment of ontological ambiguity between design and accident. It seems a product of some insurrectionary industrial-design workshop on strike against the instrumentalization of objects as functional commodities, offering new criteria such as material hybridity and dynamic tension rather than efficiency or practicality. In other words, Knight returns sculpture to process, not product, a process that unfolds for viewer and maker alike as incommensurate objects and materials are brought into unexpected and contingent relationships.

Knight's sculpture takes particular inspiration from post-minimalists such as Richard Serra, Eva Hesse, and, especially given his emphasis on the importance of gravity, Robert Morris. In *Double Prop*, 2011, a

neon-orange resin object of approximately one foot in diameter (an enlarged version of a rock-climbing grip) is balanced on a "memory" ergonomic contour pillow. This, with a foam-covered handle on a metal lever like those found in weight-lifting equipment, introduces a pop-fitness register to the sculpture. The sense of the object as vulnerable to gravitational force is palpable, recalling Morris's assertion that "one of the conditions of knowing an object is supplied by the sensing of the gravitational force acting upon it in actual space." Furthermore, *Double Prop* invites us to grapple with its components—nearly everything in the sculpture is a prosthetic device or tool for the human body—as we imagine the artist having done in the work's assembly.

—Eva Díaz



Ross Knight, *Part*, 2012, steel, plastic, 104 x 114 x 61".