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Ken Price

06.26.02

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06.20.02-07.27.02 L.A. *Louver, Los Angeles*

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An artist who has devoted a long career to fashioning objects that are simple yet mysterious, nice yet naughty, elegant yet awkward, and refined yet crude, Ken Price continues to surprise. Each body of work refers to the one prior to it, and almost everything he makes feels like a signature piece. Yet Price is always developing. Such is the case here with ten pieces (all 2002) that continue Price's interest in lumpy, bulbous, fluid forms shaped by hand in clay, then fired and coated with multiple layers and multiple colors of acrylic. The result is something like a baroque psychedelic ostrich skin but is smooth as glass. Price's works are simultaneously all high and all low. Despite their slickness, all of the works continue to reference the mass of mud from which they come, and if in looking at them one can't help but thinking they seem a bit like monumental gilded turds, it doesn't seem that these devastatingly confident sculptures would mind. The suggestion here is to piles of muck, heaps of hot fudge, figures fussing under the sheets, the Blob's better-looking cousins, the physiognomy of R. Crumb characters, and a kind of literal abstraction of the term "fucking face." But they also call to mind breathtaking natural forms such as O'Keeffe's timeworn hills, Weston's bell peppers, and the likes of Brancusi, Moore, Hepworth, and Noguchi. Imagine all these references (and their references), and you get :condea of the amazing offspring Price is unleashing on the world. Seldom has such a band of freaks invited such wonder and looked so Fabergé fine.