Art in America

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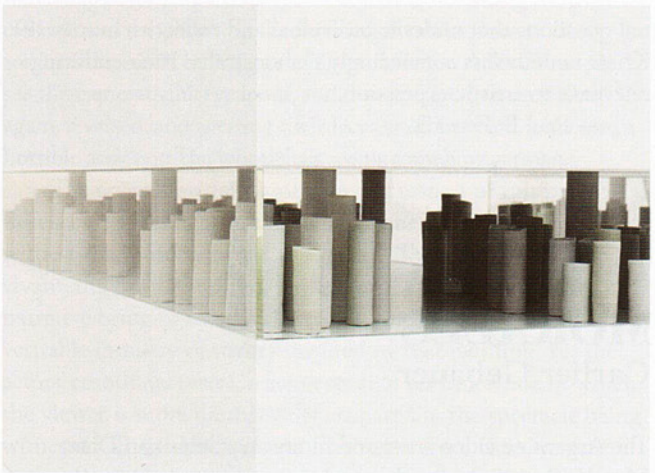
the depth of movement in its mottled-blue ground makes this work a more intense, less reticent version of its counterpart. The relationship between these two works mirrors the exhibition as a whole, imparting a sense that art, in relationship both to itself and to life, can be endlessly reconceived.

— E.C. Woodley



Detail of Edmund de Waal's *a thousand hours*, 2012, 1,000 thrown porcelain vessels in two vitrines, approx. 8 by 7 by 7 feet overall; at Alan Cristea.

LONDON

EDMUND DE WAAL

Alan Cristea

Art collector and critic Charles Ephrussi (1849-1905), as his descendant Edmund de Waal explains in his memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes* (2010), knew how "to spend time with a picture." Soliciting precisely this kind of extended looking, de Waal's exhibition, "a thousand hours," was the product of even slower making, presenting 10 separate works consisting of over 2,000 porcelain vessels in total arranged in specially constructed vitrines and on wall-hung shelf units.

In his best-selling memoir, de Waal makes much of the tactility and portability of the collection of tiny *netsuke* he inherited from his great-uncle Ignace Ephrussi (1848-1908). Iggie moved to Japan in 1947, temporarily returning to their country of origin the 264 wood and ivory carvings of animals, people, fruit and other everyday objects. Acquired in its entirety from a Parisian dealer in 1870, the collection remains in the family after five generations, having survived two World Wars and crossed two continents. De Waal has been making ceramic vessels since he was a child, and while these are larger than the *netsuke*—his work here ranged from about 1½ to 2 inches wide for the saucers and from 6 to 8 inches tall for the pots—they are similarly intended to stop time and inspire contemplation.

Display was of paramount importance. The exhibition's centerpiece, *a thousand hours* (2012), consists of two containers—each 8 feet tall—together filled with 1,000 small cylindrical white vessels. The containers are composed of stacked boxes made of either white aluminium or clear acrylic. Since the vessels occupy transparent or translucent boxes toward the top and bottom of the columns, the viewer was forced to bend and stretch to examine them. Like many of the *netsuke*, the pots appeared like creatures, congregating in small groups.

The display units had the clean, no-nonsense character of Minimalist sculpture, particularly that of Donald Judd. *In praise of shadows* (2012) reads like a parody of Judd, repurposing his aluminium stacks as supports. Small porcelain saucers rest on each of 12 black rectangular boxes, hung vertically on the wall. But rather than Minimalist serialism, de Waal's works offer variations on a theme; the vessels are the products of a manual craft whose flow needs to be contained.

In an odd way, "a thousand hours" recalled another East-West trajectory—that of Yayoi Kusama. Only a short walk from the pristine rooms of the Alan Cristea Gallery, the Louis Vuitton storefront on New Bond Street hosted a life-size, red-wigged effigy of Kusama, whose riotous polka dots proliferated on clothes, shoes and handbags. If the Kusama/Vuitton objects are indices of art-turned-merchandise, something of the same pervaded de Waal's exhibition, even as it told a completely different story of obsessive repetition and commerce, of furious coveting and collecting.

— Milena Tomic

STOCKHOLM

ANDERS KRISÁR

Nordin

Frequently labeled morbid, macabre or melancholic, Anders Krisár's sculptures perturb and provoke in their equivocal evocation of the physical and psychic boundaries that both define humans and separate us from one another. The severed heads, detached extremities, limbless torsos, bisected bodies, and gar-

Anders Krisár: Untitled, 2011-12, acrylic paint, polyester resin and mixed mediums, 43⅛ by 15½ by 28½ inches; at Nordin.

ments imbued with corporeal presences are personal musings on that universal query: "Who am I?"

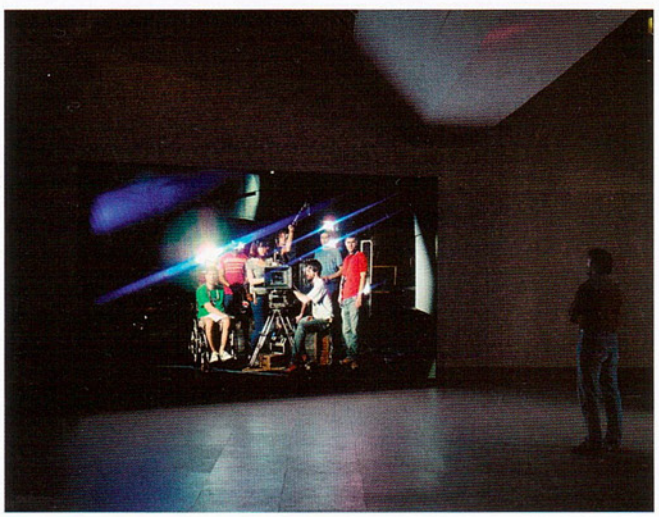
As Freud argued, an individual's identity emanates from and is entangled with those of his or her family. Stockholm-based Krisár (b. 1973), who constructs his creations using complex casting techniques often of his own invention, treats kinship as a steadfast bulwark in his work. The four pieces in his recent solo show "Spacings" were no exception. *Janus* (2012) features a polyester-resin imprint, painted in light flesh tones, of the expressionless, closed-eyed face of his wife's adolescent nephew. Suspended in a nearly 5-foot-tall fiberboard box with a rectangular opening and pale skin-colored interior walls, the lifelike cast resembled a death mask seen from its underside. Peering through the aperture, the viewer aligned his or her visage with that of the teen, evoking the notion of Janus, the two-faced Roman god of beginnings or transitions and, thus, of time itself. While *Janus* instantiated the dualities of inside/outside, life/death, self/other, it also suggested the Janus-like status of adolescence, that fleeting stage between infancy and adulthood.

Whereas *Janus* was conceived around a void, its pendant, an untitled work from 2011-12, took the materiality of the body as its subject. With polyester resin and polyurethane, Krisár produced a life-size, full-body cast of the same boy, slicing it down the middle with surgical precision. (In the process, the youth's sex disappeared.) After painting the surface to approximate the subject's skin, the artist reversed the two halves and seated them side by side with hands clasped, like clones. The sculpture's disquieting realism echoes the work of Ron Mueck, albeit without the minute surface detail. Splitting, mirroring and twinning are frequent themes in psychoanalysis. This piece literalizes the often-violent mental fractures that individuals can endure, a reality that haunts the artist, whose father is schizophrenic and whose mother is bipolar.

Another untitled work (2012) consists of a unique, full-scale cast in painted polyester resin and polyurethane of the extended forearms of Krisár's mother. They are shrouded in red sweater sleeves and mounted on the wall. With down-turned clenched fists, these appendages display uncanny verisimilitude, as if amputated from a corpse in rigor mortis, à la Robert Gober. Similarly, in *Ms. Universe* (2012), Krisár had a local tailor fashion a gray woolen suit for his wife, which he then treated with transparent polyester resin to maintain her shape, draping the form in additional clothing, with her undergarments as the exterior layer. The inert shell lay cadaverlike on the floor, its garb (a kind of metaphoric skin) the unique clue to the identity of the absent body.

Offering few categorical answers to the primeval, existential questions that underlie individual and collective human life, Krisár nonetheless convincingly demonstrated their enduring relevance to artistic expression.

— Paul B. Franklin



View of Sebastian Diaz Morales's *Insight*, 2012, HD video, 10 minutes; at Carlier Gebauer.

BERLIN
SEBASTIAN DIAZ MORALES
Carlier Gebauer

The Argentine video artist and filmmaker Sebastian Diaz Morales (b. 1975), who divides his time between Comodoro Rivadavia in his homeland and Amsterdam, is regrettably little known in the U.S., though he has exhibited widely elsewhere around the world. In "Ficcionario," his fifth solo at Carlier Gebauer, he showed three works from 2012, all completely different, yet all equally ambitious.

On a wall-mounted 19-inch monitor in a copper frame, Diaz Morales screened *Pasajes* (Passages), an approximately 12-minute loop showing a man—the "existential vagabond," as the artist dubs him on his website—walking through what seems like an infinite series of doors. Diaz Morales is nothing if not Borgesian. We see an amazing array of rooms, from a gym with a man jumping rope to a restaurant kitchen to a grand modernist lobby, as the neatly dressed man enters, strides purposefully through, and exits—only to enter the next space. The editing is seamless, and the environs dreamlike; one feels at once anxious at the relentless succession and curious about what the next door will reveal. Occasionally the man backtracks, having hit a dead end, but the door he reenters opens onto an entirely new room. Nothing shocking or untoward occurs within these spaces, and he never seems to tire or grow frustrated, remaining dispassionate throughout.

Diaz Morales has in several earlier videos deployed the technique used in *Smoke Signal* (approx. 7 minutes, also screened on a wall-mounted monitor), a form of digital manipulation that transforms live action into white lines on a black ground, something between solarization and animation. Here the artist strays into vaguely political territory. Splicing together footage from a harmless festival parade and a demonstration in which agitated participants hold aloft photographs of disappeared loved ones, he fashions a nightmarish world constantly on the verge of violence. Shots of a cameraman raised and lowered on a crane platform add a note of self-reflexivity.

The most spectacular (literally) of the three works on view