

Barry X Ball

SITE Santa Fe

In his show of 14 sculpted portraits, Barry X Ball explored the totemic power of human heads. Riffing on the traditional portrait bust—those odes on pedestals to hollow-eyed heroes of myth and history—Ball creates sculptures using a computer-aided process that

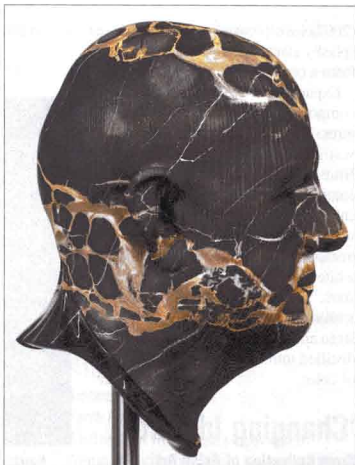
makes the new seem old, and vice versa.

He casts his own head and those of friends, fellow artists, and critics, and then digitizes the information so that he can manipulate features or overlay low-relief surface patterning before he has the heads machine-carved in stone. Although they are rendered in lapis, onyx, or marble, the sculptures' textures look scarred, flayed, and stretched, which heightens the skinlike quality of the stone. The artist generally gives these works long titles describing the pose and its subsequent distortions.

A piece that juxtaposes Ball's head, facing backward ("screaming"), with Matthew Barney's, facing forward ("stoically becalmed"), at first recalls Michelangelo's self-portrait of his soul escaping

its mortal shell in his *Last Judgment*. Closer inspection revealed flowing arabesques, crosses, Nike symbols, stars, and crescents cut into the stony epidermis, imbuing the piece with a new set of allusions.

By contrast, the



Barry X Ball, *grizzled erstwhile lightning rod veteran, nape-flayed (Bill Jensen)*, 2000-4, Italian Portoro marble, 9 1/4" x 6" x 7 1/4".
SITE Santa Fe.

silken-smooth black head of Milanese critic Laura Mattioli Rossi could be the head of a pharaoh. Her stylized, cuttlefish-shaped neckline adds an understated bit of baroque embellishment to the figure.
—Ellen Berkovitch

Howard Cook and Willard Nash

Owings-Dewey North

Howard Cook (1901-80) and Willard Nash (1898-1943) were easterners who became central characters in the development of Santa Fe and Taos as art colonies



Howard Cook, *Sun and Desolation*, 1926, woodcut on paper, 9" x 14".
Owings-Dewey North.