

# Los Angeles Times



## Culture Monster

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### Art review: Paul McCarthy at L&M Arts

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In his first hometown show in a decade, consummate bad boy Paul McCarthy proves he can still make us squirm. He inaugurates the Venice outpost of New York gallery L&M Arts with three large sculptures that build on two ongoing bodies of work: "Hummels," a series of grotesque transformations of the kitschy German figurines, and "Pig Island," an evolving, multimedia riff on Disney's "Pirates of the Caribbean" ride.



Of the Hummel-inspired pieces, "Ship of Fools, Ship Adrift" is the standout: a monumental bronze depicting a vessel helmed by sweet, terribly deformed children. Roughly textured with globs and drips, their heads and hollow eyes are violently run through with unforgiving pipes and rods. Unified by a mournful black finish, the piece reflects McCarthy's fascination with the visceral messiness of sculptural process — cracks and lumps and slop — as an analogue for physical violence and decay. In this case, the work's oily sheen resembles nothing so much as the crude we've recently seen floating atop a real ocean.

Creepier by far, however, is "Train, Mechanical," a fully articulated animated sculpture of George W. Bush having, er, relations with a large pig, who is simultaneously interlocked with another, smaller pig. This horrific ménage à trois is presented in duplicate: the first trio backed by a second, identical set, all perched atop a metal framework exposing the wires and pistons that drive the whole unsettling tableau. It's mesmerizing in the way a car crash is: one can't look and yet can't look away. Coated in rough, terra cotta-colored foam, the figures are the flayed, evil twins of Disney's animatronic creatures, whose mechanized verisimilitude is eerie, but nowhere near as chilling as McCarthy's blank-eyed golems pointlessly pumping away.

-- Sharon Mizota

L&M Arts, 660 Venice Blvd., Venice, (310) 821-6400, through Nov. 6. Closed Sundays and Mondays.  
[www.lmgallery.com](http://www.lmgallery.com)

*Image: Details of "Ship of Fools, Ship Adrift." Photo credit: Joshua White/JWPictures.com.*