

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

NEW YORK

Three Sentence Reviews of Marlene Dumas, Dan Colen, and 11 Other Art-World Big Shots

By Jerry Saltz

Charles Ray

three rooms and the repair annex

Matthew Marks Gallery

After being one of the premiere sculptors of the 1980s and 1990s, Los Angeles-based genius Charles Ray turned from strange visual effects and trippiness to far more laborious, time-consuming techniques, hard-to-work materials, and older forms, and starting in the early 2000s made some astounding works that seemed to say, “Since contemporary sculpture appears to be played out, let’s retrieve familiar forms and techniques to make something supposedly old, new again.” Like a naked boy holding a frog, or a pair of naked figures — one black, one white (said to represent Huckleberry Finn and the runaway slave Jim) — each of which was either removed (in the case of the frog-boy, in Venice) or not allowed to be installed at all (the latter work rejected by the Whitney Museum). At Matthew Marks, five works made variously of solid stainless steel, sterling silver, machined aluminum — especially the duo of a car mechanic — called to mind ancient sculptures like *Dying Gaul* and *Boy Removing a Thorn From His Foot*, works that depict semi-bent-over figures lost in their own worlds of contemplation, and made me think about the complex relationship we have with mechanics, these figures from an almost-gone world, the last ones who can take care of machines that we have made too complex for anyone but experts to repair.



Photo: Charles Ray/Courtesy of Matthew Marks