

Alexander and Bonin

EXHIBITION: Rita McBride: *White Elephant and Albatrosses*
DATES: April 21 – May 26, 2001
LOCATION: 132 Tenth Avenue between 18th and 19th Streets
HOURS: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am to 6pm

Rita McBride will exhibit recent sculpture at Alexander and Bonin from April 21 – May 26, 2001. The exhibition, entitled *White Elephant and Albatrosses* will include works in copper, bronze, epoxy-kevlar composite and vitreous enamel. This will be McBride's first exhibition in New York since 1997.

McBride's new works are fabricated casts of various standard video game consoles found in arcades and neglected bars around the world. These life-size sculptures are made of the mass-produced vitreous enamel typically used for industrial signage and subways. They are colored with the tone of technology, the kind you find in the lobby of the IBM building, or the interior of a monorail car. They create a psychological and physical tension by occupying a space liminal to the viewer's typical relationship to a discrete object of social significance. Think of a bus stop bench that one sits on momentarily, or a doorway which one passes through. As post-minimal sculptures, these consoles take you to the days of first-generation minimalism, while simultaneously presenting a post-minimal version of the present politics of sculpture as a social signifier. Their porcelain conversation, of formalism versus poetic polemics, contextualizes the viewer's relationship to sculpture through nostalgic desire, not unlike being part of a group of adolescents hanging out at a video arcade demanding idealistic escape from the master plan of their suburban demographics. McBride brings video consoles as normative forms to the post-minimal discourse as objects through which we vicariously escape social situations.

This show also includes sculptures derived from architectural awnings. Awnings are the objects that cover you while traveling from one space to another. As minimal sculptures, they elaborate on society's experience with architectural design and its standards. The awning shapes stealthily present the viewer with an interstitial experience giving one the feeling that one is experiencing a quite everyday object for the first time, better yet, it seems McBride has convinced the object itself to agree to reveal its true nature. *White Elephant*, based on an industrial air conditioning unit accomplishes the same act of magic, evoking a cityscape whose rooftop delivery and distribution systems speak of Modernism's pristine premise.

Since her 1990 exhibition of rattan works, McBride's sculptures have been based on forms such as cars, garages, cooling towers and conduit systems. She transforms the humble into the iconic and embraces a flawed reality. In the last three years, Rita McBride has had solo exhibitions at Witte de With, Rotterdam; Kunstverein, Munich; DAAD Galerie, Berlin; Kunsthalle Baden-Baden and the Wiener Secession, Vienna. A concurrent solo exhibition will take place at Mai 36 Galerie, Zurich.