

OPENING CEREMONY NEW NEWS

Mon, May 19, 2014

In the Studio With Richard Dupont

by [CLARKE RUDICK](#)

Artist Richard Dupont is preoccupied by technology. On a recent visit to his West Soho studio, we discussed everything from his obsession with treasure hunting online (he's not one to shy away from an eBay bidding war), to his daughters' head scans, to his upcoming work dealing with satellite maps of mountain ranges. With all of those hours logged in front of computer screens, it's hardly a surprise to learn that he also maintains a studio in Maine where he escapes with his wife and two children almost every summer. "It's great to be able to spend that kind of time up there and immerse myself in a completely different setting," Dupont says. "You have deer walking into the studio. It's pretty wild."



Richard Dupont with some new works.
Photos by Jessica Chou

Dupont finds his inspiration from mostly man-made, post-digital subject matter. The artist initially broke into the contemporary art market with a series of flesh-colored, naked [SCULPTURES](#) of his own form derived from a full body scan he acquired at a military base in 2001. In exchange for access to the army's advanced 3D scanning technology, Dupont agreed to have data from his body measurements collected for an anthropometric study. You'll most likely recognize his lifelike reproductions from his [SOLO EXHIBITION](#) at Lever House, which saw his controversial creations parked almost directly on Park Avenue. "They're about depersonalization and what happens when you turn a human being into information," Dupont explains. "The idea of going through the machinery, it's like dying."

Although Dupont is primarily known for his warped figures and oversized translucent head sculptures filled with trash and found objects, it would be unfair to pigeonhole him as a sculptor. The artist is constantly experimenting with new media, taking on a variety of projects and even handling his own administrative work when he hits the artist's equivalent of writer's block. "I just try to keep moving and do different things. I think that is different from other artists." Dupont's [EXHIBITION](#) at The Queens Museum at Bulova Corporate

Center, *Object Ritual*, which opens today, is an excellent example of his eclectic studio practice, featuring everything from oil stick prints made in collaboration with master printer Greg Burnet, to a smaller, rubberized version of his [MASSIVE SCULPTURE](#) now on display at Columbus Circle, to a new head sculpture filled with eBay artifacts.

When I visited the installation last week, Dupont was busy inspecting the stability of his rubber mask and taking iPhone photos of his head sculpture—perhaps one of the most Instagram-worthy series of artwork of the last decade. Despite the fact that his heads have been an immense aesthetic and commercial success (the piece in the show has already sold and there’s a long list of requests), Dupont is reluctant to increase supply to meet the demand. “I think it gets really problematic. You lose the power of the work.”

Even though Dupont’s fascination with digital systems hasn’t wavered, his relationship with technology and the way it has revolutionized the world continues to grow increasingly complex. “There’s this very dark side to [technology]. It’s used for everything from designing things that make people’s lives better to designing things that can kill people more expeditiously.” It’s most likely this awareness of the duality of his inspiration that makes Dupont’s work resonate with viewers and critics alike. “Everyone in Syria knows exactly what’s going on in the Kardashian universe,” Dupont jokes. “The differences in cultures are collapsing, which is really upsetting, but there’s this ‘universal culture’ now. There [are] so many things going on really quickly and art is trying to catch up and make sense out of it.”

Object Ritual runs through November 16

The Queens Museum at Bulova Corporate Center
75-20 Astoria Boulevard
Jackson Heights, NY 11370