

Benson, Louise. "Old becomes new, analogue meets digital, and 2D and 3D blend together in artist Richard Dupont's work" in *Luxury in Progress*, January 16, 2014.

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Old becomes new, analogue meets digital, and 2D and 3D blend together in artist Richard Dupont's work.

Louise Benson, January 16, 2014

The body has been the focus of artists through the ages, a fascination with our own human form creating the basis for artists from Anthony Gormley to the proudly decorated statues of ancient civilizations. Richard Dupont, a New York based artist whose artistic practice spans installations, sculptures, drawings, reliefs, animations and prints, gives his own take on the prominence of the body throughout history, explored through an embrace of the new possibilities of the digital age.

Dupont is quick to separate his work from these precedents, stating clearly “Their subject matter of the human form, with all of its art historical baggage, has been erased, like the ‘clear history’ function on your iPhone, and replaced with pure information.” From iPhone metaphors to laser scanning and 3D printing, contemporary digital practice is pervasive within Dupont’s work. Based on digital scans of his own and others’ bodies, the figure is then manipulated as a 3D digital model, “like a lump of clay” that can be modeled, morphed, distorted into any imaginable form. In this way, Dupont seeks to reduce his art to “pure information”, citing here a debt more to the Conceptual Art of the 60s and 70s.

His sculptural works take shape based more around the interactive, kinetic performance and body art of the same period, Dupont citing Nauman, Burden, and Beuys as influences. Their stripped-back approach towards the human form “as a raw material and a social or cultural lightning rod” informs Dupont’s perspective. Placing these principles in a contemporary context, he works between mediums both old and new. “What separates my generation and younger generations from those that came before is that we represent the full shift from analogue to digital in terms of our dominant culture,” he says. Dupont embodies this spectrum, combining materials such as bronze, aluminum, resin, marble dust, silicone and wood with laser scanning, CNC milling, 3D printing and digital animation.

“Traditional sculptural processes work beautifully with new technologies if you can figure out your own vocabulary, because it’s not really about what tools you use, but rather how you use them and to what degree you are opening up new ways of approaching the same old problems,” he explains, articulating this balance of old and new. Together they push new limits, with handcrafted and mechanical processes alike open to experimentation and exploitation.

An interplay between 2D and 3D work is also present in Dupont’s output, with relief-based pieces often hung on the wall, or large silicone heads deflated and left to hang loosely. He explains the appeal to him of the tension between the physical fact of any art object and its illusionistic or pictorial counterpoint. “I’m interested in what remains as the artwork after the making is done, and to what degree does that leftover object uphold the original image or action or idea.”

Describing the “flattening experience” of art in terms of the translation of these initial ideas, Dupont places his own sculptural work in resistance to this. This frames a characteristic tussle in his work that takes in analogue and technology, history and conceptual brevity, marking his work out in the balance between old and new.