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Review: Richard Dupont's 'Sobriquets,' the Human Form From Scan to 3-D

By Martha Schwendener
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"Lauren, Marylene 2" (2014-15), a painted bronze by Richard Dupont.
Credit2015 Richard Dupont/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Tracy Williams, Ltd., New York

Richard Dupont probably won't make it into the pantheon of figurative sculpture, alongside Praxiteles, the Italians (Donatello, Michelangelo and Bernini) or Rodin. But every era needs its representations of the human figure, and Mr. Dupont's sculptures aptly demonstrate how scanning, surveillance and imaging technology shape our conceptions of humanity today.

The first work you encounter, "Untitled" (2015), is a nude self-portrait made with cast polyurethane resin. True to life in most senses, the figure is uncannily

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compressed — a bit like a Giacometti sculpture, only Mr. Dupont's standing man looks as if he's walked into a computer program and can't get out.

To make his self-portraits, Mr. Dupont had his body scanned in 2004 at General Dynamics on the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. He's been working from these images, translated into three-dimensions, ever since. Other works conjoin the head of Mr. Dupont's wife, Lauren, scanned by a video game manufacturer, with the body of an artist's model (Marylene), scanned at Brooks Brothers with technology used to make custom business suits.

The "Lauren, Marylene" series stretched into alien forms, reminiscent of Futurist sculptures or Hollywood special effects. (There's also a vague similarity to artists like Ron Mueck and Evan Penny, although their work is more narrative, photorealistic and gimmicky.) Two-dimensional prints alongside the sculptures reveal how scanned information is pieced together via small polygons that function like cells or atoms in the computer imaging process.

The show's invitation features a photograph of the sculptor Robert Wlérick (1882-1944), mallet in hand, before a stylized female figure emerging from stone. Although not well known today, Mr. Wlérick combined classicism with new modern approaches and thus is a fitting ancestor for Mr. Dupont, who works in a traditional mode that has been radically altered by technology.

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