

MICHAEL MORAN



BUSTS AND BUST DRAWINGS





Installation view, MOP Projects April 2010

Having Said That: Michael Moran's Busts and Bust Drawings
Christopher Hanrahan

Sometimes when someone is trying to tell you something, the message gets lost. Be it a physical impediment to the delivery of the message or perhaps an intangible mental obstacle plenty of stuff falls through the cracks. Now maybe Nostradamus could get around this kind of quandary – but that's just the kind of conjecture that opens another avenue from which eventually even the most notable of seers would be flummoxed. While this isn't the sort of talk that would impress Richard Dawkins, attempting to elucidate some quantifiable reasoning for Michael Moran's BUSTS and BUST drawings is not what this essay is about. It's a reality, but not really reality as we might know and share it.

The humanizing of postmodern conjecture about the role of portraiture and outdated means of expressing it is but one of the mechanisms utilized by Moran in his BUSTS. They are impossibly personal, complex creations – though how we understand this is tempered by Moran's resolute dismissal of “frivolous ornament” as Adolf Loos would put it. Indeed Moran's refined black, white and gray presentation is coupled with relentlessly utilitarian, modern exhibition furniture. So here we find the quandary, artwork that by way of its material creation (and indeed abject material) questions and probes, yet in its final form courts the decidedly un-abrasive traits of design, harmony and realism.

In saying that - getting it out of the way is a relief; I felt it important to contextualize this work with a background of a famed seer and anti-creationist lumbering through the high church of modernism sneering all the while. Let's face it, Nostradamus afflicted with gout and an apothecary was probably just hallucinating and the esteemed Mr Dawkins is at the other end of Nostradamus' black hole. They remain handy touchstones, but it's good to keep the aforementioned in mind.

So here we find ourselves back at the beginning. Yet, having said that, to re-arrive at the beginning, we've had to travel a distance. Not a physical distance, but a mental one – not dissimilar to the Internet in that each 'page' we finish, brings us no closer to the end, each page is merely a projection – existing in

another space. Moreover, alike an indecipherably large Choose Your Own Adventure novel our understanding is dependent upon the sequence of pages we have travelled through to arrive at the given page. Moran's BUSTS have nothing to do with the Internet (although some kind of online research is inevitable), but they speak of a potentiality, and one defined by a set of rules, that despite this will invariably yield results specific to each individual viewer. Kind of like a MEME (internet) and definitively not (Dawkins) at the same time. Some BUSTS do possess a charm not dissimilar to LOL cats – or that great dog in a space suit one, “Houston, we have a Pomeranian”. Genius

Right, back to the start again. Having said all that – a regeneration of a given – the subjective interpretation of an artwork, we need to re-frame this notion within the space in which the work exists. So, here subjectivity is old hat, however, this potentiality is new. Not new as defined by Moran, simply new as defined by the space in which we exist. Check your cites people! It's easy, the Internet! Now this space we are in becomes more and more malleable. Not that this is a new idea. In fact, the idea can be returned to 'the real' if you will. The Phenomenological school of architecture clearly places its eggs in this basket. In particular Alberto Pérez Gómez posits in his book *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*, that the role of architecture should not be that of housing bodies, but rather, the provision of a stage on which life inexplicably unfolds of its own volition. A permeable and indeterminate site in which the future happens man! Whatever that is.

Now starting over - in reality, Moran's BUSTS – they exist in reality, also inexplicably unfold. Materially and conceptually the sculptures and drawings expose themselves via the knowledge that they will be received via an intangible and complex network. All the while explicitly revealing themselves to be the product of a particular and restrictive process. It is here, that the reductive decision making by Moran in the process of producing and presenting the work in fact does the work for us.

Christopher Hanrahan is a concerned onlooker and reasonably fast runner.



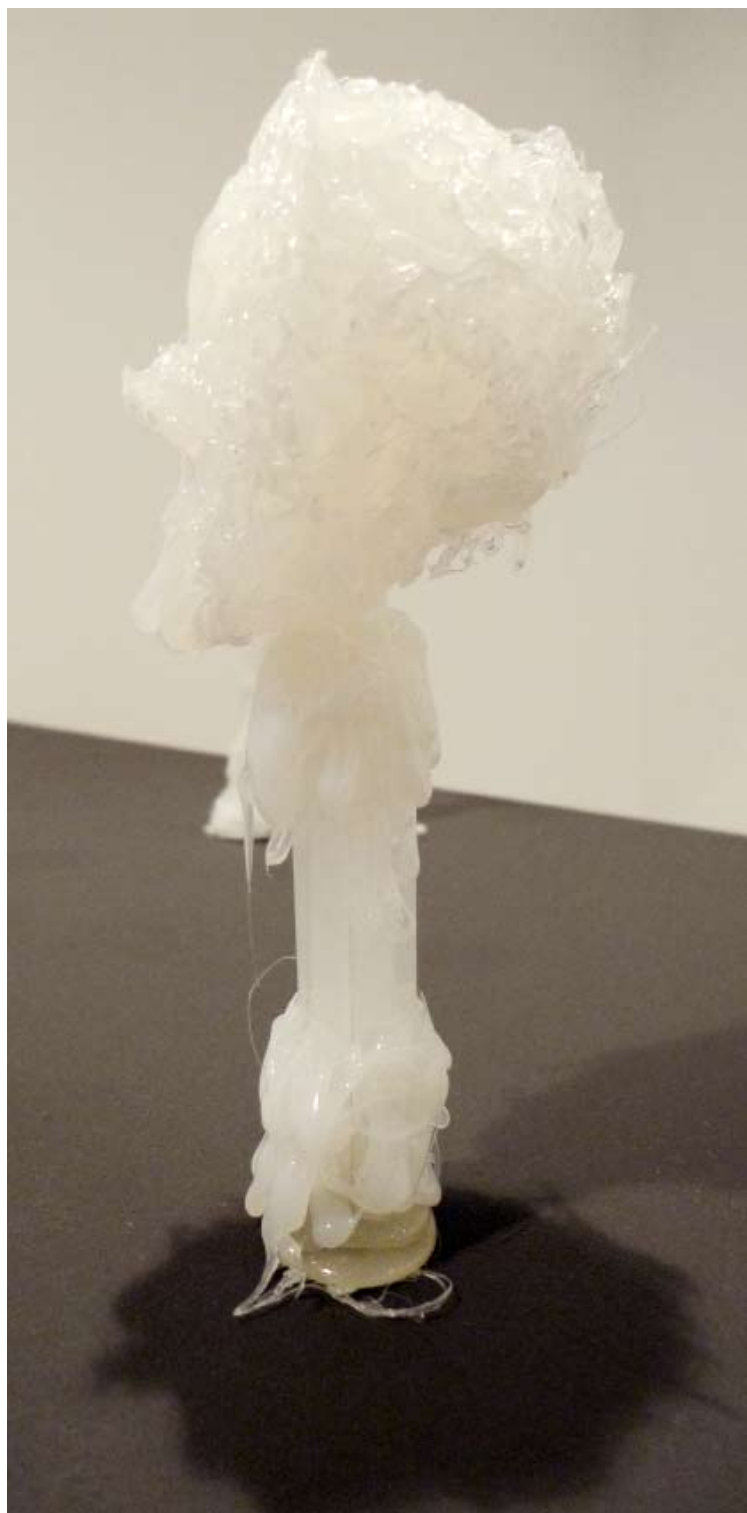


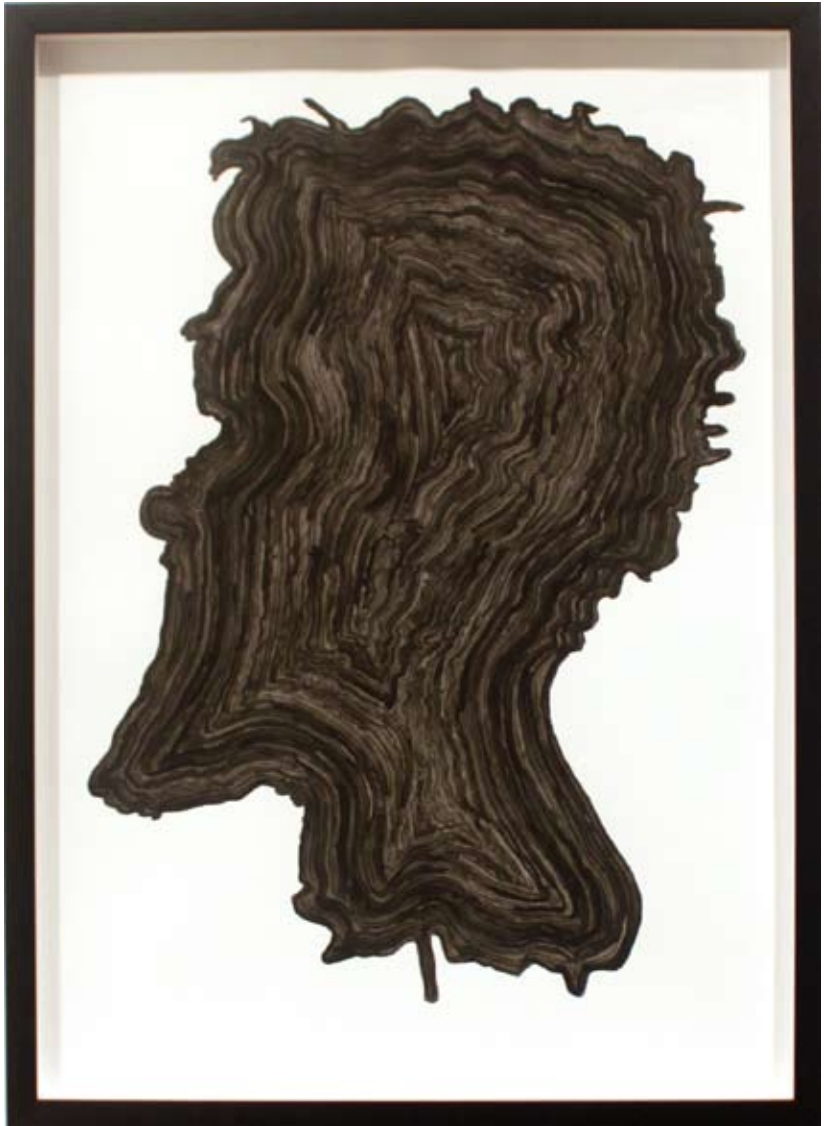
Installation view, MOP Projects April 2010



above:
Installation view, MOP Projects April 2010

right:
BUST, 2010, glue
installation view, MOP Projects April 2010





BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame



BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame



clockwise from top left:
BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame



clockwise from top left:
BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame



List of Works:

- BUST**, 2009, ink on paper, artists frame
- BUST**, 2009, glue
- BUST**, 2010, glue
- BUST**, 2010, glue
- BUST**, 2010, glue
- BUST**, 2010, glue
- BUST**, 2010, glue
- BUST**, 2010, glue
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- BUST**, 2010, glue
- BUST**, 2010, glue
- BUST**, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
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- BUST**, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
- BUST**, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
- BUST**, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame
- BUST**, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame, timber

opposite:

BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame, timber
installation view, MOP Projects April 2010



above:
Installation view, MOP Projects April 2010

cover:
BUST, 2010, ink on paper, artists frame

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MOP Projects

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MOP

2/39 Abercrombie St
Chippendale
Sydney, NSW 2008
Australia

+ 61 2 9699 3955
<http://mop.org.au/>



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