

a Dutch, Hawkinsonian pop-conceptualist

POST (DOWNTOWN; ITS MID-WILSHIRE space closed a couple of months back), along with a very strong group show featuring yet another splendidly squalid candy-colored fish-



Merijn Bolink, *Celluloid Lust* (2000)

tank grid from Martin Durazo and a pungent extension-cord-and-spinning-daisy extravaganza from Steve Shackelford, hosts the Los Angeles debut of the young Dutch artist Merijn Bolink, who successfully wrests a bit of territory from home-turf pop-conceptualist sculptors like Charles Ray and Tim Hawkinson.

Tending more toward the Hawkinsonian, Bolink deconstructs familiar objects, then painstakingly rebuilds them into object lessons about a brilliant but idiosyncratic epistemology, poetic illustrations of doomed hypotheses regarding the nature and order of things. For *The Pentasexual System*, the artist imagined genitalia for a five-gendered humanoid species in a futility-riddled faux-anatomical model of intercoupling protuberances. *Untitled (Cake Table)* amends a still life of partially composed cake ingredients by inlaying shapes of the shadows cast by various flour bags, egg cartons, baking tins and plastic measuring cups with the same material as the object casting the shadow. (The shadow of a sieve, for-example, is thus made up of flattened metallic mesh.) A firehose stretches the length of the gallery with a dark bucket set on it midway, which, on close inspection, appears to have been swallowed whole by the boalike hose. A female figure, reminiscent of a sleazy 1980s fashion mannequin, is made entirely (save the black-patent high heels) from pieces of film taken from an early-'70s Dutch porn movie. What was this guy thinking?

Why did the chicken cross the road? How is a raven like a writing desk? This kind of rickety pataphysical conundrum generates an informational moiré pattern, emerging from the layering of incompatible logics. When these are translated into tangible objects, the dissonance hovers like a fog between the artwork and its source, arresting us with its simultaneous strangeness and familiarity, its authoritative subjectivity, and its beauty. This is the essentially Surrealist (before Breton turned into Stalin) impulse that animates the work of the best contemporary artists, apparently in the Netherlands as much as in L.A. **A**

BY DOUG HARVEY