

CALIFORNIA

JACCI DEN HARTOG

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Over the past few years, the rich precedents of post-Minimalist sculpture have informed a whole crop of young artists who have in turn expanded the formal, conceptual, and ideological territory of their forebears to encompass contemporary concerns. Los Angeles artist Jacci Den Hartog's recent sculpture and drawings exemplify this development, loosely quoting post-Minimalist forms and ideas pioneered in the late '60s and early '70s by Bruce Nauman, Eva Hesse, Lynda Benglis, and Joel Shapiro, while at the same time maintaining a thoroughly personal and contemporary agenda.

Den Hartog's sculptures are made up of roughly hewn plaster structures that are liberally covered with multi-colored, translucent rubber. Although they immediately read as wildly effusive blobs or pours, the titles and referential shapes of the plaster forms bring an unexpected component of landscape into the interpretive equation. *Driving through Utah*, for example, first appears as a liquescent mound and a puddle of red, green, and orange gel, subsequently coming into focus as a compact cluster of columnar and hill shapes recalling southwestern land forms. *Spring Runoff* functions similarly, but here Den Hartog has changed terrain, humorously evoking a verdant, snow-capped mountain range that absurdly melts before one's eyes. The implied liquidity, bright colors, and diminutive, disorienting scale of these works allow for a mildly hallucinogenic experience, held constantly in check by the innocent grade-school-geography-project look of the work. The humble size and construction demystifies the art historical references—Lynda Benglis's process-oriented blobs, Joel Shapiro's effective use of scale—and brings the work into line with contemporary artistic explorations of craft idioms.

The work which most effectively embodies Den Hartog's concerns for process, scale, form, history, and referentiality is



Jacci Den Hartog

Cosmic Milk Mountain, 1993, rubber, Hydrocalc,
30" x 20" x 20"

Bridal Veil Falls, a wall-mounted formation of milky white rubber that conspicuously drips from eye-level to the gallery floor. With references simultaneously facing among Benglis, Hesse, monochrome painting, Luminist landscapes, and eco-disasters, *Bridal Veil Falls* intelligently maneuvers between abstraction and representation, the banal and the sublime, idealism and skepticism, the incidental and the staged. In all of its forms, Den Hartog's work partakes in an inclusive dialogue that is not only accessible and historically grounded, but articulate and even endearing.

Michael Darling