

ARTFORUM

Critics' Picks: Ry Rocklen
By Joanna Fiduccia
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One can spy the first objects in this exhibition from the street: a beanbag chair and a marble table decked with an elaborate floral arrangement, like the collision of a condominium lobby and a basement rec room. Only, the marble is laminate, and the struts holding it aloft are not polished brass, but cheap trophy components, while the beanbag, for its part, has been carefully, even lovingly tiled—a mosaic technique that Rocklen has plied in the past on a gamut of domestic cast-offs, from old mattresses to ratty rugs.

In the main space of the gallery, this disposition to preserve domestic life has taken on mausoleum proportions. The artist has cast the contents of his closet: neatly folded shirts and slacks in porcelain, which are hung around the perimeter of the gallery, as well as several pairs of copper-plated shoes placed casually beside a door in the center of the room. The door has been heavily graffitied on the far side and each tag inlaid with gold or silver leaf so that the double-speak of the signature ("I was here," and "I am here no longer") shimmers out of this threshold to nowhere. Finally, there is *Brian*, 2004, a life-size terracotta figure in overalls, suspended inside a scaffold made from more trophy parts. Winged victory, ever more modestly scaled in a culture where every kid gets a trophy, crowns the achievement. A wry response to Charles Ray, perhaps, who immortalized Rocklen in the buff for his recent Matthew Marks exhibition. *Brian* is the giant to this place where the stuff that makes up a life—our small expressions of individual taste, our little victories—can find a home. A place, in other words, between basement and foyer, personal hideaway and uninhabited space, otherwise called a tomb.

