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## Marc Blane at Paula Allen Gallery

by Peggy Cyphers

Marc Blane incorporates a recycling strategy of object-making with political and social commentary, resulting in a humorous blending of high and low art. Many of Blane's past sculptural works were site-specific rehabilitations of defunct, ruined city monuments. Grand-scale equestrian sculpture and the hero worship it implied is virtually a thing of the past, and Blane's work examines that cultural tradition in sculptures that revamp classical monuments. Urban detritus in the form of crushed cans has been embedded into the asphalt-encrusted surfaces of giant spheres, one of which in the show at Paula Allen (January 30-February 24) sits on top of the pedestaled horse as replacement for a human figure. The scale is consistent with classical statuary and speaks back to the viewer as a reclamation project as well as a statement about our garbage-glutted society. Antoni Gaudi's work is called to mind in the formalist strategies of maximalist applications of texture and the juxtapositioning of conceptually disparate source materials. The sphere's asphalt and mosaical surface of crushed cans combines popular culture's debris, and then elevates it on a pedestal for us to ponder. Hero worship in Blane's art is replaced by the worship of consumerism and its byproduct, trash. There is a sense of wit in his efforts to renovate defunct monuments as they document in sculpture global attempts to right the entropic path of society. In addition to the two large sculptures in the show, are photographic-montage works in which Blane collages a photo of his decorated asphalt sphere over (for instance) an equestrian monument, obliterating only the figure of the rider, in an image he calls *Disappearing Heroes*. This work functions as socio-political commentary, calling to mind the failure of political leaders to inspire and educate the public.



Teddy Roosevelt / Disappeared – 24" x 20" – photo montage