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Cornelia Parker

D'Amelio Terras Gallery

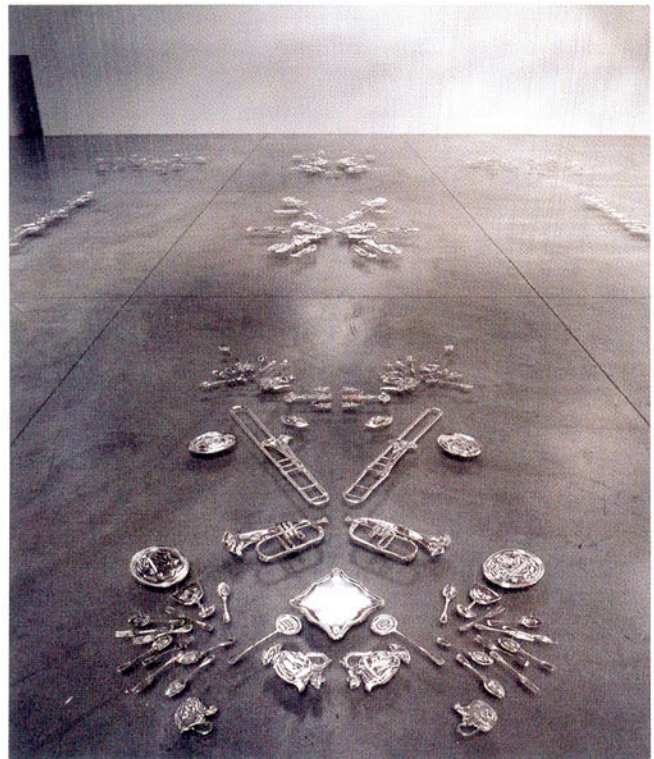
Cornelia Parker continues to use installation as a means to critique contemporary culture. Her recent exhibition, "Rorschach," included nine ink-blot designs rendered with crushed silver-plate objects suspended just above the smooth surface of the concrete floor. Since the beginning of her career in the early 1990s, Parker has specialized in installations that use found, antiquated objects to evoke memory or emotion. As a postmodern archaeologist, she explores the depths of conspicuous consumption, using tattered remnants collected from flea markets such as keys, trays, pitchers, and tea service sets.

Strung across an expansive warehouse space in Chelsea, the nine pieces hung symmetrically in three rows. *Rorschach (Thing 1)* (2005) consists of various metal objects that the artist had previously crushed in a compressor. Two bowls, five silver platters, four trumpets, and one dozen spoons eloquently render a Rorschach pattern in three dimensions. Quite similarly, *Rorschach (Vera)* (2005) incorporates two trombones, two trumpets, silverware, platters, and a number of pots. While each component mimes the splotches of a Rorschach ink-blot, Parker's

work is much more than a mirror of the mind. *Rorschach (Endless Column I)* is long and narrow, and when seen from a distance, the linear arrangement of silver spoon, candleholder, platter, and tureen resembles glistening drops of water. Parker clearly intends each piece to function as a material abstraction, reviving the notion of authenticity against the deadening sea of objects that litters nearly every space across the world. In an effort to break past the psychological numbness created by this dense volume of commodities, she uses found objects to create nonfigurative forms that momentarily draw viewers' attention away from the objects themselves.

Parker's work transgresses academic boundaries and inverts psychology's use of the Rorschach to investigate and classify personality. Her flat, destroyed objects prevent viewers from making literal associations with the real. One could say that Parker's attempt to use art as a form of anthropological critique risks losing itself to irony. However, the vast amount of space within each installation clearly shows how far these pieces stand from the fast-paced circuitry of market exchange, offering a perspective on a contemporary wasteland that bears comparison with that evoked by T.S. Eliot.

—Jill Conner



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