

COVER

ARTS NEW YORK

IRONIC ICONS

Jude Schwendenwien

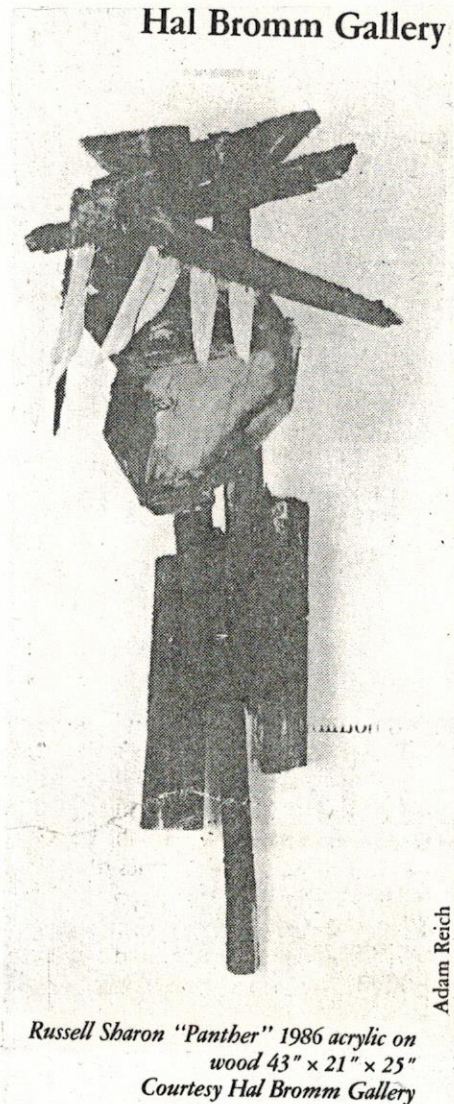
The new Russel Sharon show at Hal Bromm demonstrates this sculptor's ability to transform popular icons into disturbing art objects. In the back room of the gallery hang five sculptures on four walls. Each work consists of jagged pieces of wood assembled in a decisive manner and covered with thick, creamy paint.

The references for these pieces are animal head trophies commonly found in homes as mementoes of a hunter's skill and luck. Sharon takes an impression of a bull's head, dragon's face, or antelope's head with long horns and depicts the head as grotesque wooden mutation slathered with garish mixtures of paint.

The sculptures stem out from the walls in aggressive, predatory manner and make the viewer feel as if he or she is the object of a nightmarish hunt or trap. While one can enjoy the sensuous beauty of the eye-catching colors, the concept behind the constructions is nothing less than frightening.

Sharon has taken a socially-acceptable icon (animal head trophy) and, through a visceral manipulation, has exploited the icon's inherent brutality to animals. The irony of the installation becomes more cutting when one realizes that in an art world context, each sculpture is as much a commodity as its antecedent found in many American dens and trophy rooms. ■

Hal Bromm Gallery



Adam Reich

Russel Sharon "Panther" 1986 acrylic on wood 43" x 21" x 25"
Courtesy Hal Bromm Gallery

HAL BROMM

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