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ART IN REVIEW

Bryan Crockett  
'Cultured'  
Lehmann Maupin  
Through April 6

BY KEN JOHNSON

Bryan Crockett's show is possibly the creepiest one in town right now—creepy in a good way, that is. Mr. Crockett, who made his mark five years ago with grotesque resin-dipped balloon sculptures, has created seven sculptures of greatly enlarged, hairless baby mice, the kind used for scientific research. These repulsive possum-sized creatures appear to be expertly carved from blocks of pink marble, with the nonmouse parts left as rough stone.

All anatomical features and folds of skin are rendered in detail, with plastic whiskers and fine white fuzz added and blind eyes made of shiny stainless steel. The sculptures were actually modeled in another material and then cast in a faux-marble composite, but they look as if they were made by a Renaissance stone worker.

Compounding the Old World style, each mouse represents one of the seven deadly sins, but with a modern, scientific spin: each is supposed to have been "engineered for the study of human diseases." Thus the information given out at the gallery explains that the snarling representative of anger is pumped up on testosterone. An immensely fat glutton has been given a gene for obesity. Lust is a mouse altered to have extremely sensitive skin.

The sculptor also created a bizarrely ugly "Somatosensory Homunculus"—a small faux-marble man with hands, feet, lips and genitalia exaggerated in accordance with their relative sensitivity. Mr. Crockett's work may be conceptually top-heavy, but that is offset by its visceral weirdness.