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Bryan Crockett at Lehmann Maupin
 By Edward Leffingwell

Absorbed with the ethical implications of transgenics—the purposeful creation of hybrids by transplanting genetic material across species—Bryan Crockett offered a suite of macabre, admonitory sculptures representing newborn mice that might conceivably have been engineered for the study of human disease. Ranging up to 31 inches long by a foot or more in height and depth, Crockett's figures descend from his *Ecce Homo* (2000), not included in this exhibition, a human-scale representation of a laboratory mouse engineered with a human immune system for oncological research. His new sculptures (2001) are similarly composed of marble crystal cast with a polymer binding, classically modeled in the round as though hewn from stone and articulated to personify the Seven Deadly Sins. Uniformly pink, and fitted with chromed balls in lieu of eyes to return the viewer's gaze, they evidence a dusting of synthetic down on their expressive muzzles.

As an observer of the displacement of moral authority by science, Crockett passes no judgment on genetic tinkering. He invests his not-entirely-imaginary models with the historical attributes of sins he suggests are made irrelevant by the march of technology. Crockett introduced his series with a reference to the vanity of cloning, as identical mice, facing each other, embody the sin of *Pride*. Reclining as it clutches its strand of chromosomes like a cluster of champagne grapes, the mouse of *Greed* manifests the extra chromosome present in the disposition to Down's syndrome. *Anger* assumes the posture of an enraged lion, its spine crenellated with excessive testosterone; *Sloth* has malformed limbs manifesting not only the characteristics of arthritis but the notorious effects of thalidomide. The mouse symbolizing Lust appeared in perpetual rut, with rumples, excessively sensitive skin. *Gluttony*, endowed with the gene for obesity for the study of diabetes, ripples with fat, and *Envy*, with its tiny, human-shaped ears, refers to human ears that have been grown on laboratory mice as well as to the replication of the human immune system for the study of auto-immune disease.

Crockett also presented a large tondo drawing, *Drawn Out of My Mind on Paper* (1999), more than 4 feet in diameter, centered on a human skull. Chromosomal strands that resemble barbed wire, orgiastic figures, fetal mice, floating eyeballs and a tattoo showing a thorn-crowned Christ emerge in frantic, zodiacal orbit. Plus there are frogs a gnarly fish or two, a cigarette butt, an onco-mouse drinking from a beaker, a threeeyed Mr. Clean, pharmaceutical capsules and a syringe. The entire piece is strewn with funky clumps of

the synthetic flocking Crockett applies to vivify the epidermis of his sculptures. His most recent work, the cultured marble hominoid *Somatosensory Homunculus* (2002), provided further allegory for the state of man, each body part scaled to register its relative sensitivity. With engorged glans penis and lips, enlarged hands and feet, the pathetic, foot-high figure epitomized the horror of Crockett's journey into scientific madness.