

KARL JENSEN

Curated by Lilly Wei

September 8 – October 15, 2005
(Opening Reception: Thursday, September 8, 6-8pm)

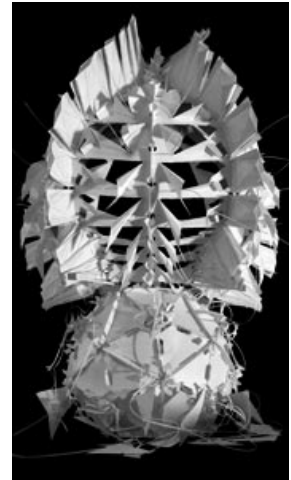
“I see a kind of jumble between pop and baroque....
a cornucopia of the overabundant, a deliberate confusion,
the American dream pumped up, American largesse
gone awry.”

—Lilly Wei
Exhibition Curator

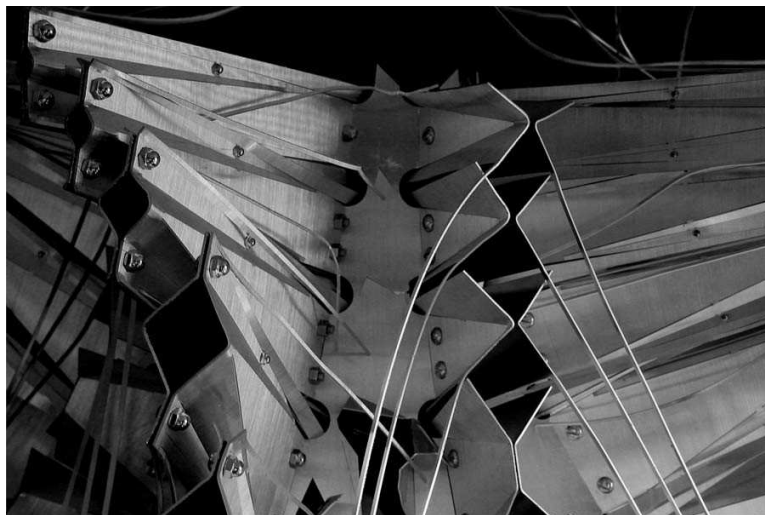
In his most recent work, artist Karl Jensen explores the dynamic interplay between beauty and tension by creating a visually ornate and strangely seductive object, whose fluency of form and intricately decorative surface obscure irreconcilable truths.

Gothic, Baroque, and Islamic architecture along with Haeckeleian-inspired natural forms have influenced Jensen’s newest sublime riff on the American dream. In *Crown Jewel Stolen from the King of Hell*, 2003-05, Jensen likens America to an irrepressible weed emboldened by its own scrappy beauty – part Arcadia, part industrial chimera, with the seed for its own destruction harbored within its protective armor.

The language of steelwork in Jensen’s pieces stems from traditional architectural concerns with material, fabrication, and form. Fleshing out each step of his complex spatial equation beforehand, intricate drawings are transformed with the aid of the computer into exquisitely detailed paper maquettes, which are later fabricated into large complex steel carapaces.



Crown Jewel Stolen from the King of Hell, 2003-2005
Paper study
12" x 12" x 18"



Crown Jewel Stolen from the King of Hell (Detail), 2003-2005
126" x 65" x 71"
aluminum, steel, acrylic, ceramic, concrete, wood, taxidermied
badger, and neoprene.

Taking great pleasure from playing with surprise, Jensen likes to tug at the strictures governing his architecture training by injecting a formidable degree of uncertainty arbitrarily into the equation, such as restricting himself to forming the base of the piece contiguously from a single piece of metal. His dexterous use of decorative flourishes from wig-festooned ceramic skulls placed at the base, to acrylic flower petals and nose art interspersed along the surface, to further articulate the orchestral complexity and sheer pageantry of his vision. “This kind of ornamentation,” says

Jensen “is an expression of love for what I do...And I think if someone (artist and/or viewer) really connects with a piece that feeling is palpable, required.”

(over, please)

ARTIST'S BIO:

Karl Jensen was born in Texas in 1964. He received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Rice University in 1989 and a Master of Fine Arts in painting from Hunter College in 1994. His work has been shown recently at the Drawing Center in SoHo, and in the *Working in Brooklyn* exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. He has also earned a number of public art commissions including a current collaborative project for a footbridge in Phoenix, Arizona.

Jensen is also an architect, and is a partner in the firm of Birds Portchmouth Russum Architects in London, England. Their work has been widely exhibited in Europe, including the Royal Academy in London and the Architekturmuseum in Basel, Switzerland.

Jensen has received awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts and the Architectural League of New York. His work as both an artist and an architect has been reviewed in *Art in America*, *Architectural Record*, *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice*. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

ABOUT CUE:

CUE Art Foundation, a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, provides educational and professional development programs in the visual arts. These include student internships, stipends, exhibitions, public lectures, and an in-gallery studio program, all of which draw from the talents and experience of the diverse community of artists, art critics, and teachers that the Foundation brings together.

CUE's exhibition season gives unknown or under-recognized artists public and professional exposure comparable to that offered by neighboring commercial galleries, without the usual financial restraints. The Advisory Council, an honorary group of artists and leading figures from the arts education, applied arts, art history, and literary communities, has the responsibility of selecting exhibition curators. The curators, in turn, nominate artists to exhibit at CUE, and continue to play a role throughout the exhibition process. Both the Advisory Council and the exhibition curators actively participate in the public lectures and educational programs.

For additional information, please contact Beatrice Wolert-Weese, Gallery Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, 212 206-3583, or email beatrice.wolert@cueartfoundation.org.