

FRANK BENSON**25 March – 25 April 2009
9 Balfour Mews London W1**

For his second show at Sadie Coles HQ, American artist Frank Benson has recreated two pieces from his recent past in different materials, bronze and stainless steel.

Human Statue (Bronze) resurrects the supernatural double bluff of *Human Statue* (2005). In the original version a man adorned in silver greasepaint poses on a plinth. His hair seemingly clogged with the same sticky covering, he effectively gives off the illusion of a figure posing as a statue in a tourist spot such as Covent Garden, Times Square or the Pont des Arts. Originally made of a durable fiberglass composite, recasting the piece in bronze takes the idea to a new level of completion conceptually. It also fittingly allows for the possibility of placing the piece outdoors.



Material production and process are of utmost importance to Benson. After a painstaking casting and finishing process, *Human Statue (Bronze)* was painted with an automotive primer, polychromed with lightfast acrylics and then top coated with a UV protective matte clear coat to perfect the illusion of a living, breathing performer. Finally a layer of oil paint in rich metallic tones was applied, mimicking an actual performer's make-up while approximating the colour of the unpainted patinated bronze base on which the figure stands. Vacillating between sculpture and painting, *Human Statue (Bronze)* is equally indebted to both mediums.

With *Turtle (Bronze)*, Benson transposes a piece first fabricated in gypsum. The work presents a surrealist combination of two natural forms: a life-size sculpture of a mutant Galapagos turtle with casts of the artist's hand where the flippers and head should be. As in *Human Statue (Bronze)*, mimesis again plays a complex role; just as the bronze casting eerily captures with supreme accuracy the textures of the anatomies portrayed, the gestures of the hands deftly signify both the graceful poise and fluid movement of the turtle's extremities. The original piece's form is further accentuated by perching the turtle on a facsimile of a hydraulic piston. The conceit suggests the possibility of movement while slyly referring to the architectural history of the gallery space, which was once a garage and currently retains a functioning hydraulic elevator. This remnant from the previous tenant provides Benson with scope for a characteristic negotiation of real and implied movement.

Much like a filmmaker who revisits his previous work in order to produce a limited edition Director's Cut, or a recording artist who issues a re-mix of an earlier album, Benson has substantially re-interpreted the pieces which provided the source material for his current show.

For further information or images please contact Rebecca Heald on +44 [0] 20 7493 8611 / rebecca@sadiecoles.com
N.B. Opening hours Thursday – Saturday 12 – 6pm and by appointment