



"Resin-Fossilized and Machine-Cut: The Art of Matthew Angelo Harrison"

By David Behringer

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Installation view, Matthew Angelo Harrison, *Ambidex*, 2021 \\\ Photo: Farzad Owrang

Detroit-born artist **Matthew Angelo Harrison's** [first solo exhibition](#) at [Salon 94](#) in New York feels ancient and futuristic, seductive and uncomfortable, completely human and totally alien. "Ambidex" displays 8 polished resin blocks that suspend objects in time – each "emblematic of the United States in some way". These CNC-altered works often cut into the objects they contain: wood African sculptures with uncertain authenticity, exotic animal skulls, and the headlight of a Tesla. With hypnotic beauty, Harrison's work questions our myths and beliefs about labor, American history, commercialism, identity and beyond.

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Fields to Burrow, 2021 (detail)

Each work begins by suspending an object in clear or darkened translucent resin. Harrison then CNC-carves the blocks using machinery he builds himself. The cuts are in direct response to the unique energy of the objects, often cutting into the wood or bone itself. The cuts reveal as much as they remove, while refracting or blurring the passage of light. It's an ever-shifting discovery with every step.



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The "African" sculptures offer the most complex questions. The press release notes that these dark-patinaed objects "may or may not be entirely fake". Sometimes Harrison acquires real objects from expert dealers, and other times (as it's implied) obtains them from less authentic or tourism-manufactured sources. He doesn't note which is which, referring to them only as "wood sculptures", asking us to question our identity, fetishism, commercialization, and relationship to Africa, past and present.



Culling Figure, 2021 (detail)



Echoic Sections, 2021

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Spasmodic Surrender, 2021 (detail)

The bones offer a thrilling visual play between the organic and the machine. "Spasmodic Surrender" (pictured above), is a resin-encased Zebra skull. The deep pattern of channels abstracts the bone while introducing a visual play of black and white, and revealing the inner network of the bone itself.



Wraith, 2021 (detail)

In the middle of the gallery, the nearly black "Wraith" (above) holds the headlight of a Tesla. Visitors who crouch to peer into a horizontal cut will be treated to a cross section of metal and circuits.

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Helmet, 2021

"Helmet" superimposes the form of a head (likely 3D-scanned from a wooded figure?) over a well-used hard hat. Like the rest of the works in "Ambidex", it draws you in with an inescapable visual sparkle, then prompts you to question your own ideas of race, labor, cultural-fetishizing, and the human experience at large.



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I highly recommend listening to Matthew Angelo Harrison speak about his work in [this short film](#), produced on the occasion of a recent exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel. A skilled sculptor, he also speaks with an incredible warmth, curiosity and intelligence.

Matthew Angelo Harrison's "Ambidex" is on view on the 3rd floor of Salon 94 in New York through October 30th (open Wednesday-Sundays).



Matthew Angelo Harrison. Image courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. \ \ \ Photo: Naaman Rosen

What: Matthew Angelo Harrison "Ambidex"

Where: [Salon 94 Gallery](#), 3 E 89th St, New York, NY

When: September 14 - October 30, 2021 (Wednesdays-Saturdays), appointment recommended [here](#), bring mask & proof of vaccination

All images courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York © Matthew Angelo Harrison (unless otherwise noted)

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