

Mess Haul

Richie Budd's sculptures cook popcorn and meat

By **Ben Davis** Tuesday, May 29 2007

Details

**Richie Budd: "Emoting
Skillformational
Rememories"**

Priska C. Juschka Fine Art
547 West 27th Street
Through June 23

At first blush, it's easy to pass over [Richie Budd](#)'s messy suite of sculptures at [Priska C. Juschka](#) as visually unimpressive, inert.

These random clusters of appliances, lights, and foodstuffs, inelegantly fused into reliefs via black rubber caulking, look like something Budd's fellow Texan [Robert Rauschenberg](#) hawked up on his way to inventing his "combine paintings."

Looking closer, certain items recur, constructing a theme: disco and siren lights, security cameras, [Foreman grills](#), popcorn

makers, bubble machines, perfumesamples—all things associated with the sugar high, and then the sugar hangover, of consumption. Tiny car-key remotes dangle from various sculptures. Press their buttons, and a mechanical belch issues forth.

The numerous electric cords sprouting from each work aren't incidental either: You've got to feed these machines. They're meant for you to plug into. Play with these sculptures and the various contraptions light up, rumble, come alive; leave them alone and they revert to disheveled blobs.

The objects Budd incorporates represent all five senses in a deliberately fragmented way: Screens play security-camera feeds at cocked angles, chopping up space; the scent of a pile of popcorn crashes into a nearby "Shades of Vanilla" [Febreze](#). Budd makes atomization a theme—one often finds sealed plastic globes embedded in his sculptures, containing specimens ranging from [Cheetos](#) to a dead mouse. If his works don't register as visual wholes, it's because they're portraits of a mind bombarded by trashy mall culture, unable to focus; these combines don't combine.

There's a vaguely dystopian, critical air to all this, but one shouldn't miss how it's swept up by a groovy, genial vibe. Consider the show's centerpiece, a freestanding tower that incorporates,

among other things, a [Casio](#) keyboard, a toilet seat that can shoot pineapple-scented steam, a popcorn maker, and a grill (ask for popcorn at the desk, bring your own meat). Speakers drone a goofy-creepy motivational tape: "What is completion? What is my backup plan?" The whole installation offers less a real critique than a haunted-house ride, with its portrait of the schizoid effects of junk culture as the clunky animatronic demon you're happy to be frightened by.