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ART IN REVIEW

Bonnie Collura -- 'Rebel Angel'

By KEN JOHNSON
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Expelled from heaven and thrown down into corporeal reality, the rebel angel becomes a monster, a freak of nature. This evocative thought animates "Rebel Angels," Bonnie Collura's compelling but imperfect exhibition of semi-abstracted, tragicomic figure sculptures.

Made of plaster, fiberglass, wood and steel, Ms. Collura's life-size figures have twisted, bulbous, broken and otherwise fantastically altered bodies. She gives them suggestively vague masks and costumes from sources like Bernini, commedia dell'arte, "The Wizard of Oz" and Disney's "Snow White."

The all-blue "Scarecrow" has three faces expressing either pain or ecstasy; multiple, mismatched sets of arms and legs; and yellow confetti leaking like straw from various orifices. That there are elements of grace and beauty in the faces and limbs adds to the horror of the soul's entrapment in terrestrial chaos. (Alternatively, maybe the real fall is that of sculpture from its Renaissance peak into the mess of 21st-century postmodernism.)

On the down side, a tendency to generalization muffles the psychological and sculptural impact of Ms. Collura's work; much of the formal improvisation looks confusingly undifferentiated. If the crimes and punishments of these traumatized beings were more particularly and inventively articulated, maybe it would enhance the already impressive baroque pathos.