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ART IN REVIEW

Nick Hornby: 'Sculpture (1504-2013)'

 By KAREN ROSENBERG
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Churner and Churner

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205 10th Avenue, between 22nd and 23rd Streets,
Chelsea
Through Nov. 2

Nick Hornby's small solo show in Chelsea — just four new works, three sculptures and a set of photographs — is a concise look at a sweeping trend in contemporary sculpture. Mr. Hornby, who also has a piece in the Museum of Art and Design's new survey "Out of Hand: Materializing the Postdigital," is among the many young artists who take advantage of computer modeling.

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In the show's centerpiece, "The Present Is Just a Point," he uses digital imaging to extrude the profile of Michelangelo's David, as if he were squeezing the sculpture through a mold.

He then casts this obviously computer-generated form in marble resin composite and stands it on its pointy end next to a more traditionally modeled boulder, as if it were a giant ice cream cone missing its scoop.

A set of digitally manipulated photographs titled "Back Towards Flat," meanwhile, continues the gradual flattening of sculptural volume in Matisse's serial bronze reliefs "The Backs." Picking up where Matisse left off, with a squarish female nude bisected by a long ponytail that trails past her buttocks, Mr. Hornby teases the two halves of the figure apart and further dehumanizes them so that we're left with two abstract pillars. Lovers of Matisse know that he struggled to decide when a work was finished, so there's a kind of impertinence behind Mr. Hornby's tribute.

These works are quietly stimulating, unlike many other examples of digitally reworked masterpieces. Then again, maybe that is a function of their modest setting, in one of Chelsea's smaller galleries; you have to wonder what would happen if Mr. Hornby had the budget and space of, say, Matthew Day Jackson at Hauser & Wirth.

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