

ARTFORUM

BEST OF 2007

Jack Bankowsky

JACK BANKOWSKY IS A CRITIC AND EDITOR AT LARGE OF *ARTFORUM*. HIS ESSAY "CIAO RENSSELAERVILLE" APPEARS IN THE CATALOGUE FOR *RICHARD PRINCE: SPIRITUAL AMERICA*, CURRENTLY ON VIEW AT THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK.

8 Matthew Monahan (**Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles**) Where most Monahan apologists wax poetic re: the mysteries of the ancient and olden, all I can think about is Anthony Caro! Remember the maneuver whereby the famous formalist dipped an arm of steel below the pedestal top and put the art of sculpture on high alert? Monahan's sculptures climb up and down their Sheetrock perches or swallow them whole; his fractured figures bust from their Plexi vitrines or plop themselves atop them; a face begins as a drawing and, with a crumple, becomes a 3-D sculpture. As Ari Wiseman's miniretrospective makes abundantly clear, this artist is as much the formal virtuoso as his forefather; but where Caro pared his art down to a few discrete relationships, Monahan's roiling improvisations draw on everything that sculpture has ever gotten up to, which includes the human figure and face, most often depicted in extremis.