

# ARTnews

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## Robin Hill

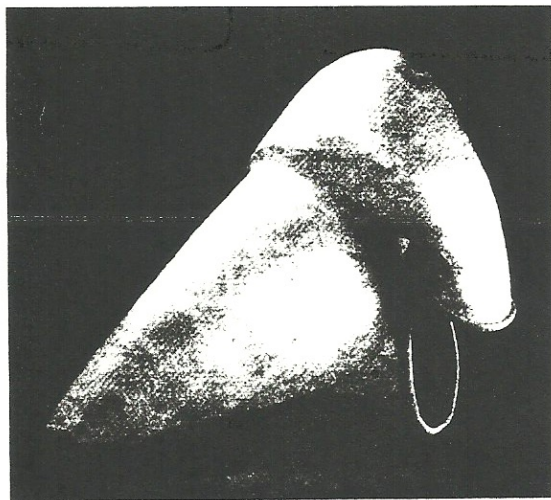
LANG & O'HARA

Robin Hill is one of several artists continuing the exploration of process-oriented organic sculpture that was begun by Eva Hesse. But Hill's quirky, multilayered approach to her medium has given her work a distinct identity. As the closing show at Lang & O'Hara, her handsome collection of hollow, waxy vessels revealed her grappling with issues of process and material to wonderful effect.

The metaphors called to mind by these pieces—human torsos, organs, sexual orifices—are potent, but to the works' credit, they are never overwhelming. Rather, Hill balances her chunky, abstract formalism with organic intimations: parchmentlike skins, podlike cavities, paunchlike swellings. Hill casts her forms from concrete armatures based on clay maquettes. As a result, the works exude a heft that is belied by their shell-like interiors.

*Valve*, at the entrance to the show, is a hollow triangular pouch of fiberglass and muslin, resembling the atrium of a heart. Coated with beeswax, it begins and terminates in two circular mouths that abut each other and resemble partially unrolled condoms. *Receptor*, dyed red, looks even more like a heart chamber, although the aortal opening is raised in the pose of an inquiring head. In *Ro Cham Beau* Hill repeats an ovoid torso form three times: in wax, paper, and rubber. Each shape represents another stage in the creation process. In *Chaperone* Hill juxtaposes a cupped form with three husk-shaped molds, which lie before it like skin sheddings.

*Kowtow* is a dense, irregular orb, cleft on either side by slotlike indentations. Looking into the slot reveals the translucence of the hull, while the surface, which at first glance resembles marble, is revealed upon examination to be wax-coated fiberglass. That urge—to lean in closer to discover new textures and new layers of meaning—permeated this engrossing array of work. —George Melrod



Robin Hill, *Valve*, 1990, mixed media, 51 by 66 by 50 inches. Lang & O'Hara.