

## *“Poor robot”*

For several years now, I have been making sculptures that move. When I first started using elements that barked, walked, talked or jumped around, the work received a mixed response from the art world. The implication was that I couldn't possibly be serious, as the sculptures did not conform to the conditions and expectations of high art. In fact, according to the philosophy of art in which I was educated, I should have been banished from the art world altogether. In my student days my most esteemed teacher once asked me with real passion, “What about what you owe to Art?” This question has left me puzzled ever since. If I am told something must be a particular way I am immediately anxious to turn it another and see if it must be that way as well. At the same time, many people — artists and others — offer advice concerning my work. I attempt to follow every suggestion, though this is not always possible.

My particular curiosity is the manner in which the mind attributes characteristics of persona to inanimate objects. Though my work is, generally speaking, figurative, I am not concerned with portraiture or depiction: rather I am concerned with creating the combination of elements necessary whereby the viewer projects a credible persona onto a machine. The depth of the work is the degree to which the viewer can understand and relate the mechanism of his or her response to the tangible mechanism being observed. The significance of proposing the object as a person may be in understanding the opposite condition: how people come to be seen as objects. Once I heard someone say of a machine I had set up to perform a task, “Poor robot.”

