

Evans, Hayley. "Meghan Smythe Sculpts The Fleshy Contortions of Passion and Death," Beautiful/Decay, April 24, 2015.



Meghan Smythe is a California-based (Canadian-born) artist who creates expressively disturbing sculptures of crushed flesh and glistening viscera. The muted, peaches-and-cream colors are initially deceiving in their innocence; emerging from the twisted monuments are dismembered and defleshed body parts, shaved down and mashed together. Like a theater of the grotesque, faces gasp from beneath piles of entrails and moldering skulls, and limbs reach and splay in dynamic expressions of violence, love, lust, and tenderness. Much like the contortions of passion and death, the energy rolls throughout the compositions, oscillating between states of vigor and exhaustion. Leah Ollman, having reviewed Smythe's recent solo show at the **Mark Moore Gallery**, provided this spot-on description of "Young Becoming" for *The Los Angeles Times*:

"Limbs are entwined, tongues extended. Clay is rarely, if ever, this carnal. Some of the skin is mannequin-smooth but veined with cracks. Some seep a pink foam or a pale fecal flood. Erotic pleasure plays a part here, but is only one of many competing charges" ([Source](#)).

By displaying representations of body parts in surprising (and unsettling) reconfigurations, Smythe brings the charges of pleasure and agony, beauty and squalor to the operating table. Displayed for us are simultaneous births and deaths, made almost indecipherable by the material realities of the body: the fluids, the waste, the mess of living, and the will to survive. In "A Light Culture", for example, a man with a severed arm and scarred flesh sits quietly, wounded but pensive, while a disembodied hand gropes at his erection. Elsewhere, in "Lunacy", a decapitated subject grimaces in despair while reaching for his heart. More tenderly still, in "Coupling", two hands lie adjacent to each other and touch lightly. In moments of both intimacy and horror, Smythe turns the possibilities and limitations of the flesh into sculptures and makes them strangely beautiful.

Visit Smythe's [website](#) and the **Mark Moore Gallery** to learn about her work and see additional images. Check out Ollman's [article](#) for a captivating description of the solo show.