work is much more than a mirror of the mind. Rorschach (Endless Column II) is long and narrow, and when seen from a distance, the linear arrangement of silver spoon, candleholder, platter, and tureen resembles glistening drops of water. Parker clearly intends each piece to function as a material abstraction, reviving the notion of authenticity against the deadening sea of objects that litters nearly every space across the world. In an effort to break past the psychological numbness created by this dense volume of commodities, she uses found objects to create nonfigurative forms that momentarily draw viewers’ attention away from the objects themselves.

Parker’s work transgresses academic boundaries and inverts psychology’s use of the Rorschach to investigate and classify personality. Her flat, deployed objects present viewers with making literal associations with the real. One could say that Parker’s attempt to use art as a form of anthropological critique risks losing itself to irony. However, the vast amount of space within each installation clearly shows how far these pieces stand from the fast-paced circuitry of market exchange, offering a perspective on a contemporary wasteland that bears comparison with that evoked by T.S. Eliot.

— Jill Corner

New York
Evan Penny
Spereone Westwater

Arguably the most memorable exhibition of last fall, Evan Penny’s “No-One In Particular” was distinctive for works that offer less an extreme realism than an alternative reality. Penny’s bust sculptures appear life-like despite their distorted presentations. Some are portraits, and others, as the show’s title suggested, are ciphers made up in Penny’s imagination but with particularities that make them appear as individuals. All are super-scaled, but the strangest common deformation compacts the robust-looking figures into a few inches of relief. In some works, Penny further warps the planes to force some eye-popping perspectives. He runs the risk of seeming gimmicky, but, beyond the spectacle, these sculptures are conceptually compelling.

Overtly distorted works such as Madrileño #1 (2005) could be misunderstood as “automatic” computer manifestations, since their images seem taken directly from skews and scalings made in Photoshop or 3ds Max. For this reason, Penny’s works fit our digital zeitgeist—the difficult-to-realize anamorphoses and planar distortions that have been understood for centuries are now push button available and have entered the common visual lexicon. In three dimensions, the deformations are infinitely more complex because (as Mark B.N. Hansen points out in New Philosophy for New Media) the depth hinders resolution of two-dimensional distortions. The forced axonometric view in the male nude Aerial #1 (2005) characterizes our time and is derived from popular video games such as The Sims, eloy graphics, or the video surveillance of ubiquitous wall-mounted cameras.

While Penny uses imaging software, most of the work involves hand-cutting clay, rubber casting, and “painting” many pigmented silicone layers. Finishing touches include cast eyes, implanted hairs, and custom-made clothing. These hand crafted works that evoke the photographic and digital are paradoxical but offer a fitting allusion for human perceptions and expectations informed by photographic optics and digital alterations. It is appropriate that Penny recently worked in the film industry making special effects props and prostheses designed to look “correct” for the cinematic camera that has become a substitute for human vision.

Penny drives the photographic point home in L. Faux CMYK (2001-05), a spectacle in which the haptic succumbs to an optical phenomenon—the familiar misregistration of the four-color process. Making physical realizations of the blurred and multiply exposed image, Penny evokes Man Ray’s tripled La Marquise Casati (1922) and Warhol’s doubled silkscreens. In all of Penny’s works, the references to painted photorealism can’t be missed—the oversizing, exacting details, and the subjects’ objectified, mug-shot expressions are evocative of Chuck Close portraits and Howard Kanovitz cutouts.

With each Penny work, the mind struggles to adjust to the distortions. Looking away results in a disturbing split-second phenomenon in which reality seems as skewed as the artwork’s themselves. Renaissance illusionism followed Protagoras’s dic-

Left: Evan Penny, Aerial #1, 2005. Silicone, pigment, hair, and aluminum, 106 x 60 x 13 in. Right: Evan Penny, Madrileño #1, 2005. Silicone, pigment, hair, fabric, and aluminum, 96 x 15 x 5 in.

— William V. Garis

New York
Swoon
Deitch Projects

The Swoon opening was remarkable for a huge punk crowd that spilled into the street and for an action-packed show that was simultaneously flat and three-dimensional. The art ranged from bridges and installations to cut out, drawn, and woodcut images variously inspired