

Roberta Smith, "Olaf Breuning: Small Brain Big Stomach," *The New York Times*, November 27, 2009, pp. C35

## Art in Review

### Olaf Breuning

#### Small Brain Big Stomach

*Metro Pictures*  
519 West 24th Street,  
Chelsea  
Through Dec. 5

There is more to Olaf Breuning than videos of young men done up in wigs, war paint and animal skins running around rural Switzerland doing hilariously bad imitations of their prehistoric ancestors. This exhibition introduces Olaf Breuning the joking sculptor, who enlarges and embodies rudimentary cartoons drawn in simple black lines and shapes using wood and black acrylic. The results are more interesting to look at and think about than you might expect.

One sculpture is a large, crude outline of a head in profile. Inside its perimeter, the word "me" appears 11 times, against one small "you." "The Wheel of Death" is a large black dot with the word "death" on a sticklike pedestal beside it. "Focus. Focus. Focus" is a little forest of 11 pedestals each supporting (obviously) the word "focus" and making it impossible to do so. Proceeding in this manner, or in ways equally appropriate to the message, these works consider the mind-body split, life's ups and downs, the endless succession of generation after generation, and people who want too much, talk too much and Google too much.

There is something very satisfying about Mr. Breuning's sense of humor, scale and materials, especially as seen against stark white walls. But jokes aside, this is a good show, and in the final gallery you'll even find a wig or two.

ROBERTA SMITH