

Keith Edmier, "My Manifesto: The Manifesto that Isn't," *Vice: Garage Magazine*, September 6, 2017.



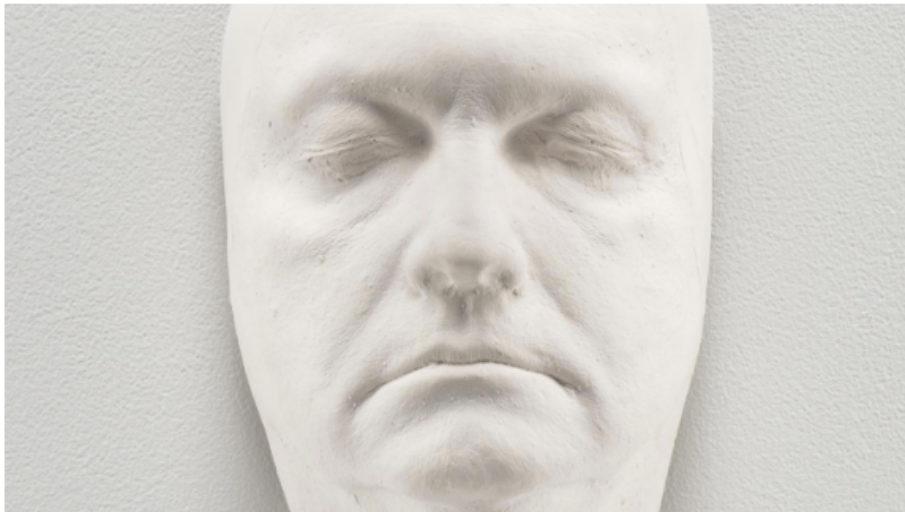
GARAGE MAGAZINE

My Manifesto: The Manifesto that Isn't

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KEITH EDMIER

Sep 6 2017, 4:05pm



Keith Edmier, *Edmier Imagines* (Keith Edmier, age 48), 2017. Plaster. Courtesy Petzel Gallery

Inaugurating a series of original artists' manifestos commissioned exclusively for GARAGE, sculptor Keith Edmier takes a cue from two notorious texts of the past century, bookending his own unique proclamation with a paradoxical denial of the form itself.

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Petzel

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This is not a manifesto.

I started thinking about a manifesto based on the two that sprung most immediately to mind: *Manifesto of Futurism* by F.T. Marinetti (1909) and *SCUM Manifesto* by Valerie Solanas, which was published in the year of my birth, 1967.

I first came across *Manifesto of Futurism* in my teens. At the time I was interested in non-object-based art, performance, and technology. I loved Futurism, the Bauhaus, Robert Wilson, Chris Burden. I made work using computers and experimented with virtual reality as early as 1988. Reading Marinetti's text now, it's deeply flawed. It reads like something by a neo-Nazi Trump supporter: "We will glorify war, the world's only hygiene, militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman."

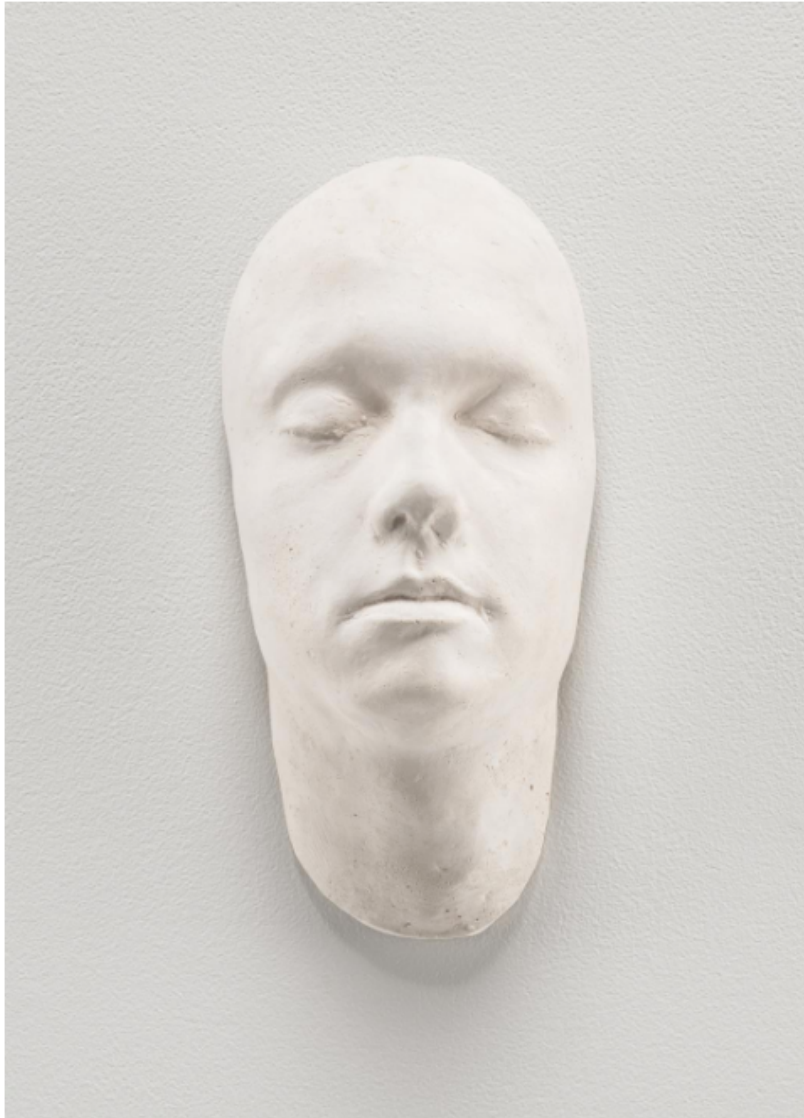
I read *SCUM* (Society for Cutting Up Men) *Manifesto* for the first time more recently. I'm making a body of work that deals with, among other things, women being screwed over by asshole men in power, their revenge and redemption. I made a sculpture of Medea that led me to Solanas. The *Manifesto* is deeply problematic but also hilarious, the inverse of Futurism and so relevant to our current moment:

The female's individuality, which he is acutely aware of, but which he doesn't comprehend and isn't capable of relating to or grasping emotionally, frightens and upsets him and fills him with envy. So he denies it in her and proceeds to define everyone in terms of his or her function or use, assigning himself, of course, the most important functions—doctor, president, scientist—thereby providing himself with an identity, if not individuality, and tries to convince himself and women (he's succeeded best at convincing women) that the female function is to bear and raise children and to relax, comfort, and boost the ego if [sic.] the male; that her function is such as to make her interchangeable with every other female. In fact, the female function is to relate, groove, love, and be herself, irreplaceable by anyone else; the male function is to produce sperm. We now have sperm banks.

In actual fact, the female function is to explore, discover, invent, solve problems, crack jokes, make music—all with love. In other words, create a magic world.

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Keith Edmier, *Edmier Imagines* (Keith Edmier, age 13), 2017. Plaster. Courtesy Petzel Gallery

Art at its core is about life and death. Until very recently I took that too seriously, too literally. Now I'm questioning my whole history of art making, and my future.

I'm turning fifty on September 6, and I've participated in the art world for 26 years now. I've taken, consciously or unconsciously, a romantic, suffering-artist approach, and am now feeling the consequences. Working on a show for me was always like life-or-death. Like a junkie, I would spend everything I owned, go into debt, put my health and personal relationships in jeopardy, all in the name of art and the exhibition. The show would, I thought, save my life.

Well, it hasn't, and that's not the fault of art. Art is not life. It can be death, though.

I remember seeing a bunch of artworks damaged by Hurricane Sandy. The art had left and they became just materials again. Where did the art go?

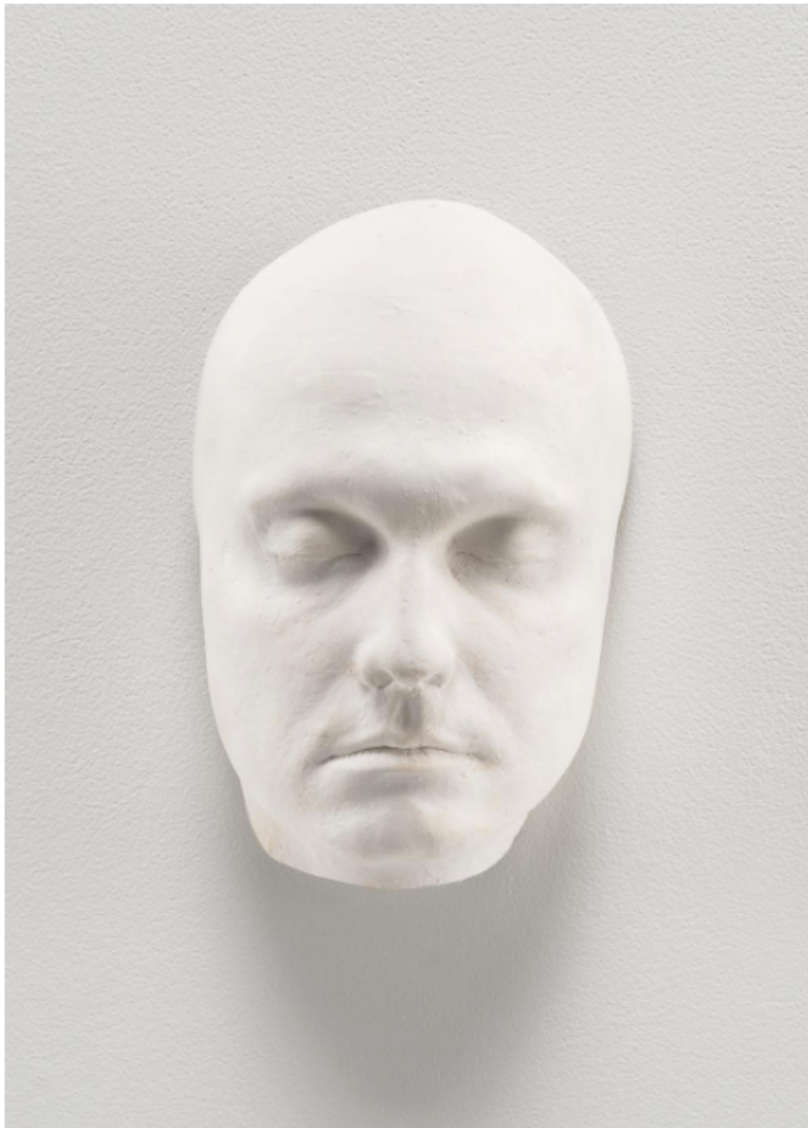
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I'm having to give up my studio next month. In throwing stuff out and putting things into storage, I contemplate daily what's going to happen to all of it when I die.

Another falsehood of mine—I chose art over having children, thinking my artworks were "my children." I am both the mother and father of my art. I am also the child. Therefore, I am immortal.



Keith Edmier, *Edmier Imagines* (Keith Edmier, age 30), 2017. Plaster. Courtesy Petzel Gallery

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All of my stuff will eventually break down. Some of it already has. Images of my work might exist in some digital form—frozen in time, the objects shown in their prime, ageless—but not their deaths.

Images aren't "true." They can be manipulated, degraded, lost. So you're left with words, which in the end might be the purest of all art forms. Words can lead to death, though.

This is not a manifesto.



Keith Edmier, *Edmier Imagines* (Keith Edmier, age 50), 2017. Plaster. Courtesy Petzel Gallery

Keith Edmier's "Mother Mold" is on view at Petzel Gallery, 35 East 67th Street, New York, from September 6 to November 4.

VICE

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/mbbz7q/my-manifesto-keith-edmier