

## Large sculptures with an affection for the everyday

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"Nowhere Fast," **Jordan Griska's** show of large-scale sculptures, marks a relatively uncommon use of the Esther M. Klein Art Gallery at the Science Center, and makes me hope that more one-person shows of large artworks are on the gallery's horizon. Complex, chart-like pieces (something of a fixture here, given the gallery's science bent), especially as presented in group shows, tend to get a little lost in this open lobby space. A few too many charts, and a viewer's attention naturally drifts. But the sculptures of **Griska**, 27, a Philadelphia-area native, are attention magnets.

It's hard not to think of a young Robert Morris or a younger Matthew Barney when you see the show's only works on paper, three large photographs of **Griska** in performance, wearing a white stretch outfit and mounted on a tractor seat that is part of his steel sculpture Icarus, which stands nearby and looks like it could conceivably take flight. (In the photos, he is using Icarus' rowing mechanism to power a propeller that inflates an attached Mylar parachute.)

The Morris/Barney impression resonates in a few of **Griska's** sculptures - they're ambitious, strange, dreamlike, and made of common materials - but to a lesser degree. In all of them, it's apparent that he is more interested in industrial fabrication and real machinery than his sculptor predecessors were.

The tubelike form of Ad Infinitum (2008), for example, was taken from a McDonald's play slide. **Griska** made a mold of the slide, fabricated it in fiberglass several times over, then joined the separate elbow-joint sections to make an enormous wormlike construction. To create its surface, which is embedded with LED lights in the patterns of constellations and their surrounding stars, he enlarged book illustrations of constellations at a Kinko's, attached them to the individual elbow joints as temporary templates, and drilled holes for each star, into which he inserted the LEDs. Last but not least, he painted the illuminated lines between the LEDs with silver conductive ink.

The show's most recent work, Propane Tank Submarine (2010), was made with a similar attention to craft and an affection for the everyday.

Its main body is a 500-gallon propane tank that had been buried underground for the duration of its use for gas storage. **Griska** found it in a scrap yard, cleaned it up, cut his designs for windows and entry portals with a torch, and welded in a steel fillet that followed the radius of the hull's exterior. Fitted with exterior fire extinguishers and a bronze sailboat propeller, the finished sub could pass for an early version of the real thing - or at least a less elaborate Jules Verne vision of one.

**Griska** plans to make videos of performances of himself interacting with his sculptures - besides rowing on Icarus, he has crawled through the elbow joints of Ad Infinitum several times and will, at some point, transport his sub through a crowded urban site such as an outdoor cafe or train station, using a crane.

Even so, Barney-like fantasies strike me as too far afield from the real world for **Griska**. For now, at least, his DIY sculptures speak volumes for themselves.

Esther M. Klein Art Gallery at the Science Center, 3600 Market St., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays. 215-966-6188 or [www.kleingallery.org](http://www.kleingallery.org). Through June 25.