Anthony Pearson (American, b. 1969) lives and works in Los Angeles. His work has been presented in solo exhibitions at Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago (2010, 2007, and 2003), and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles (2010 and 2007), Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York (2009), and Midway Contemporary, Minneapolis (2008.) Pearson has participated in such group exhibitions as *The Anxiety of Photography*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado (2011), *At Home/Not At Home: Works from the Collection of Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg*, The CCS Bard Hessel Museum, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York (2010), Constructivismes, Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels, Belgium (2009), *The Possible Document*, Herald St., London (2008), and *Stuff: International Contemporary Art from the Collection of Burt Aaron*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit (2007.) He received his Masters of Fine Arts from the University of California Los Angeles (1999) and his Bachelors of Fine Arts at the California College of the Arts, Oakland, California (1996.)   Pearson's work is included in the collections of The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Anthony Pearson is organized by the Contemporary Art Museum Saint Louis and curated by Dominic Molon, Chief Curator.

All works appear courtesy of the artist, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

Anthony Pearson

October 18 – November 25, 2012

Anthony Pearson's sculptures and photographs explore the subtle visual and textural nuances produced by transforming various, primarily metallic materials according to their intrinsic properties. His Front Room project features a selection of recent "tablet" sculptures created through a procedure in which an original structure is formed from clay and then cast in bronze. He uses the malleable nature of clay in a manner similar to that of drawing, in which the material is worked and reworked—just as lines are drawn, erased, and drawn again—to make marks in space. By casting the final result in bronze, however, Pearson conversely engages a process typically associated with permanence and solidity. His previous combinations of photographic and sculptural work in what he refers to as "arrangements" highlighted unexpected resonances between the examinations of light, shadow, and surface in the two different mediums. This presentation of sculptures thus represents a significant departure in his practice by emphasizing their unique status as objects – simultaneously visually streamlined yet materially dense.

This selection of works featured in CAM's Front Room combines elements of both traditional and still-unconventional artistic techniques that demonstrate an awareness of and an interest in how both sensibilities might coexist within the same body of work. The more process-oriented aspects of these works, such as the shaping and layering of clay forms, evokes the groundbreaking practice of artists such as Lynda Benglis (American, b. 1941) and Richard Serra (American, b. 1939) in the late-1960s and early-1970s, both of whom made the radical gesture of allowing the inherent nature of raw materials to determine the ultimate outcome of their sculptures. Pearson's use of a centuries-old bronze-casting process, however, places his more exploratory approaches to object-making within a very different art historical context—one more associated with conventional figurative sculpture from the nineteenth-century and before. The human scale of the works and their presentation on the wall also has a profound impact both in the way we experience them and how we interpret them culturally. They not only invite comparison to abstract works in other mediums—painting, for example—but also variously resemble elongated spoons, the human spinal cord, or the Ancient Roman "fasces"—a bundle of wooden sticks with an axe blade emerging from the center that was a symbol of power and authority. The works also recall decorative sculpture of the 1950s and 1960s, which took the modern "fine art" of the time and translated it into mass-produced objects intended to complement furniture as part of an overall domestic aesthetic identity. Despite their initially abstract and unassuming appearance, Pearson's sculptures demonstrate an ability to evoke a broad range of cultural and art historical icons and precedents.

The tablet sculptures developed from Pearson's photographic work, which throughout his career has been defined by an investigation of the physical properties of the medium—such as its basic use of the interaction of light on a prepared surface to generate an image or visual effect—as well as a process-oriented experimentation with a range of materials including plaster, bronze, and metal foil. In this sense, he extends a fairly recent tendency in contemporary photography towards a greater emphasis on the photograph as a tangible object rather than simply a pictorial one. His Untitled (Solarizations, Series of Four) photographs from 2009, for example, featured images of his drawings on different surfaces that were then solarized in the darkroom to alter their visual texture. The drawn and handmade nature of the content of this work anticipates a similar approach in his recent sculptures. Pearson's parallel production of objects and images thus engages a complicated dialogue between photography and sculpture that suggests similarities in how works in both mediums are produced and experienced.