



Douglas White
Elephant Study I
2011 (in progress)
Unfired clay,
plaster,
plover.
59 x 16 x 12 in.

PRIVATE VIEW LONDON

ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Douglas White's sculptural fixation

ABOUT A DECADE ago, between finishing his BFA and starting on his MA at the Royal College of Art, Douglas White took a trip to East Africa, where he stumbled on a haunting sight. "Walking through the bush, I suddenly came upon this dead elephant," the London-based sculptor recalls. "The flesh was gone, and it was just this deflated skin over loose bones, almost entirely abstract."

White confesses that he wanted to collect the remains for his practice, which often involves found objects. Such scavenging wasn't possible, but the memory stuck with him, and the powerful image has been cropping up in his work in recent years. In 2009's "Elephant Totem" series, for instance, he hung knotted beech roots on frames to recall the dead beast's twisted anatomy.

White's style changes frequently but broadly assimilates an interest in the transformation of materials into his desire to address the changes being wrought in the natural environment. And his pachyderm obsession has yet to subside. For his third solo show at **Paradise Row**, October 11 through November 12, the artist spent the summer experimenting with clay, a new material in his repertoire, in an attempt to evoke the thick, cracked hide. "I haven't fully seen how it works out yet," he says during a break after hanging up some roughly six-foot-square pieces to dry, "but I think I want to keep it close to human scale. Elephant size comes off as too theatrical." —ERIC BRYANT