etched by the superb lighting of the gallery, seemed to quiver in an invisible breeze. This forthright but delicate approach to sculpture continued with three additional white plaster works, two of which portrayed flower bouquets, the third a rabbit with ears erect.

One might be excused for appreciating Baechler's black and white cameos less as independent sculptures than as concretized images abstracted from his paintings. Not that the show lacked works that more fully exist in three-dimensional space—for example, six busts ranging from 68 to 77 inches high. Here, though, Baechler's uneven globes, with their seemingly slapdash placement of small noses, eyes and lips, look too much like Saturday Night Live's Play-Doh hero "Mr. Bill." More successful is the 10-foot-tall Figure (Walking Figure), a bronze diamond-shaped torso set upon an inverted V of legs and topped with a woman's round head. With arms swinging, the work seems almost alive in its purposeful stride. Unlike Baechler's other sculptures on view (which, like his paintings, have about them a shyness, almost autistic introversion), the woman seemed to dominate the gallery space allotted to her. After decades of child-like imagery, one wonders if the artist's inner adult isn't coming out at last.

—Steven Vincent Baechler

Robert Arneson at George Adams

Titled "Arneson and the Object," this exhibition, which was organized by the Palmer Museum of Art at Pennsylvania State University, featured 20 sculptures in ceramics or bronze and 10 drawings from throughout the career of Robert Arneson (1930-1992). Focusing on the artist's depictions of everyday objects, it was a compendium of his visual, linguistic puns, sculptural oxymora, trademark gaudy glazes and absurdist sensibility.

The earliest work in the show, Six Pack 16 Oz. (1964), a life-size ceramic sculpture of soda-pop bottles, displayed the closest relationship to Pop art. Yet, the sculpture also epitomizes the differences between that movement and the West Coast Funk with which Arneson is usually associated. Contrary to the cool, industrial finishes of much mid-'60s art, his work remained emphatically handmade; he never abandoned craft. The repetition of bottles in Six Pack 16 Oz. is complicated by the expressionistic individuality of each form. The fact that one bottle is uncapped suggests a human presence now absent.

Indeed, the relationship between things and their users, heightened by the objects' fleshy anthropomorphism, was a primary theme of this show. Scale (1965) is a ceramic replica of a bathroom scale—impossible to use, for it would surely break under anyone's weight—imprinted by two feet, one of which has left behind its five toes. (These footprints are reportedly those of Bruce Nauman, Arneson's student at the time, whose connection to his teacher—specifically regarding Nauman's own penchant for artistic punning—is one of the revelations of this show.) Scale evinces Arneson's exceptional ability to produce objects that are simultaneously attractive and repulsive, funny and confounding.

Arneson's unrefined, at times adolescent, brand of comedy links him to a number of younger artists (Mike Kelley comes to mind). Giant Eye Screw (1971), for example, is an emblematic enlargement of the hanging device—also a homonym for "I screw." Such intentionally artless wit also informs Arneson's overtly political works of the mid-'80s such as Ronny Portable (1986), which envisions Reagan as a TV-head with thorny antennae.

If the show sometimes pushed the limits of esthetic tolerance—for me, the three garish, tongue-kissing self-portraits in Potted Flower Heads (1981) were a bit much—overall, it was an effective presentation of Arneson's challenging work and wicked sense of humor.

—Cary Levine

George Quasha and John Cage at Baumgartner

As a young artist, George Quasha was liberated by John Cage's esthetic. In celebration of that influence, this exhibition included a selection of Cage's New River Watercolors (1988). With their quiet forms and textures, these are the refined residue of an extended consultation of the I Ching. Quasha's own works are in two mediums: rocks, and graphite on paper. Quasha's rocks are medium-sized and usually flatish. It is the work of an instant to spot a likely rock, but it may take the artist days—or years—to see how two rocks fit together to form a single piece. This fitting follows strict rules: one rock must be balanced on another at a narrow point of contact; no adhesive is permissible, nor may either rock be modified in any way. The results are astonishing.

At first glance, one doesn't quite see what one is looking at. Quasha, it seems, has found a batch of wildly eccentric rocks. Then one realizes what is going on: in each case, two rocks have been joined at precisely the point that turns them into a unity. These are configurations so delicately balanced that the slightest touch would topple them. The title of this series, "Axial Stones," draws attention to the axis.

Robert Arneson: Ronny Portable, 1986, bronze, 35 x 21 1/4 x 14 inches; at George Adams.

Donald Baechler: Figure (Walking Figure), 2003-04, bronze, 10 feet tall; at Cheim & Read.