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Gopnik, Black. "At the Jewish Museum, Kris Martin Riffs on Retail." *artnet News*. June 16, 2015.

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THE DAILY PIC (#1332): I came across Kris Martin's bronze heads in a smart Jewish Museum show called "Repetition and Difference", which explores (wait for it) objects that repeat with differences. I have to admit that the Martins didn't impress me right off: I read them as the latest rehash of early Modernist heads by Brancusi and his crowd (Elie Nadelman, anybody?), with "wounds" added to them as a dose of crude expressionist angst.

Then I discovered that Martin's pieces are based on real mannequin heads, such as jewelers or milliners might use in their windows. That means the sculptures are really about how thoroughly Brancusoid modernism has filtered down to the most commercial corners of 21st-century visual cultural, to be rehashed in endless mass-produced variations. (Queue this exhibition's theme music.)

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The gashes in Martin's heads, rather than standing for trauma, become normal retail wear and tear, part of the planned obsolescence that's inherent in anything made from styrofoam. My only wish is that Martin had left his heads in that material; in bronze, they become way too Park-Avenue posh for their own good.

In our one-percenters' world, bronze speaks the language of highest-end tchotchkes. Styrofoam speaks of and for the Yankee street. *(Image courtesy Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; detail of a photo by Achim Kululies, Düsseldorf)*