

# The New York Times

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## ‘VB64’

*Deitch Studios*

*4-40 44th Drive, Long Island City, Queens*

*Through April 12*

Vanessa Beecroft, known for her performance-sculptures with live models, has long since outgrown the art world. Ms. Beecroft appears in fashion-magazine spreads, collaborates with the rapper and producer [Kanye West](#) and is the subject of a documentary, “The Art Star and the Sudanese Twins,” which had its premiere at [MoMA](#) in February. So it’s surprising that in her latest production, “VB64,” she tries to reframe herself as a gallery artist. True, Mr. West produced the filmed performance of “VB64,” but traditional art forms (casting) and sources of inspiration (Sicilian funerary arts) play down the element of spectacle.

One clue to this agenda is Ms. Beecroft’s use of sculpture in addition to nude models. White gesso casts of women lie on and around oblong, coffinlike pedestals. Some of the figures cross their arms over their chests; others curl into fetal positions. Quite a few are on their backs with heads elevated just slightly, as if they had expired in the midst of a Pilates session.

During the opening last month 20 models completely covered in white makeup (down to their waxed and trimmed pubic hair) posed on pedestals alongside the body casts. (If you missed it, a video projected on the gallery’s back wall recreates the scene.)

“VB64” is more likely to inspire blank stares than profound meditation on life and death, but it makes effective use of this high-ceilinged, narrow-columned space. And on a conceptual level Ms. Beecroft appears to be moving away from the kind of controversial, superficially political work exemplified by her 2007 Venice Biennial project, in which African models were doused with red paint in reference to genocide. The monochromatic whiteness of “VB64” could be interpreted as a snide reaction to critics, but it’s also a self-parodying mausoleum — and maybe, for Ms. Beecroft, a rebirth. **KAREN ROSENBERG**