

# THE HUFFINGTON POST

## Matthew Rolston's Ventriloquist Dummies in 'Talking Heads: The Vent Haven Portraits'

Huffington Post Editorial

Visit celebrity photographer Matthew Rolston's website and you'll see pop icons like Michael Jackson, Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift and Nicki Minaj looking as glossy smooth as a porcelain doll. Yet his photographs of dolls themselves are not so forgiving.



Matthew Rolston, *Hook Boy*, from the series "Talking Heads."

Far from the gloss of celebrity glamor, Rolston's photographs of ventriloquist dummies show the cracked paint and decayed wood that has phased the physical faces themselves, though not the smiles painted upon them. Rolston, who was discovered by Andy Warhol, snapped 100 dummies at the Vent Haven Museum in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky.

There is an eerie beauty to the silenced puppets, their expressions somewhere between entertaining and grotesque. Rolston captures the dummies' "head shots" straight-on against a white background, treating the wooden dolls as stars of another era. While the

beauty of Hollywood's most stunning starlets will eventually fade, these ventriloquist dummies forever keep smiling, although this eternal existence is far from beautiful.

The photographs are compiled in the book "Talking Heads, The Vent Haven Portraits," which we predict will catalyze superbly bizarre coffee table small talk.