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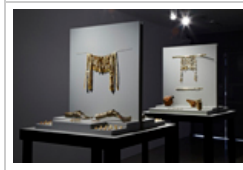
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Liz Glynn

Pitzer Art Galleries



Liz Glynn, "No Second Troy" installation view, 2012, Photo Sean MacGillivray. courtesy pitzer art galleries.

Whether by design or by accident, the Nichols Gallery at Pitzer College may have been the perfect venue to showcase Liz Glynn's first solo museum show, "No Second Troy." It's an odd, two-story space with a second level and various nooks and crannies scattered throughout. The path through the gallery is an exploratory, labyrinthine one, and Glynn's show took advantage of this by populating it with a scavenger's trail of questionable artifacts and video documentation of journeys taken through historical sites. The show was essentially a thoughtful archaeological dig enacted through conceptual art, and as such, it was an enchanting, absorbing experience.

As with all of Glynn's projects, the thinking behind "No Second Troy" is packed full with ruminations on specific historical events and their larger, ongoing cultural reverberations. At play here were the excavation of "Priam's Treasure" from the former site of Troy (now Turkey) by amateur archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann in the 1860s; his gifting of this treasure to the Pergamon Museum in Berlin; the sacking of said treasure by the Soviet Red Army in 1945; the museum's making of poor replicas of these treasures as a substitute display; the discovery by later archaeologists that the treasure actually predates the Trojan War by several hundred years; and the importation of Turkish Gastarbeiter (guest workers) to help rebuild West Germany in the 1960s. All of these occurrences were assembled and tossed together in order to examine our investment of meaning in cultural objects; what happens when both people and objects are recruited/reclaimed and cross borders into different contexts; and the various myths, hopes and falsehoods that inevitably erupt.

Trojan Surrogates (Neues Museum Case I and I) (2011) are two pristinely displayed sets of crude replica objects from Priam's Treasure—rings, necklaces, bracelets, cups, a gourd, etc.—one set made of gold-plated paper trash, while the other set was made out of bronze cast from the paper set. These objects evoked the hopelessness and absurdity inherent in imbuing objects with too much significance, and of attempting to replace them when they're lost. The comical part was that the paper objects looked better than the bronze.

Upstairs, the video Trojan Return (2011) followed Glynn as she carried a bag filled with her crude replicas through the Pergamon Museum, and then through the site of Schliemann's dig. The piece ended when she trespassed onto the dig site and dumped the contents of her bag into the spot where the treasure had been found. The journey Glynn took, which reversed the path of the original goods, is funny and inquisitive, conjuring the frictions that exist between the "real" and the "fake," the embodied and the imaginary, the intention and the result. In falling short of our ideals, we tend to reveal a wealth of agendas, actions and beliefs.

- Carol Cheh

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