

JEAN GIGUET AND THE ART OF REPURPOSING AT MCQ FINE ART

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/found/ Through April 15, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Michele C. Quinn Fine Art, 620 S. Seventh St., 366-9339.

Upcycled art—objects made from discarded materials—is the focus of the */found/* exhibition curated by Aurore Giguet at Michele C. Quinn Fine Art. With found-object works by Jean Giguet, Troy Gillett and DK Sole, the show critiques the throw-it-away default position of frenzied consumer culture. Why junk that wood when you can make a sculpture? Although all three artists repurpose materials, they achieve radically different results. It's artistic intent, not the transformational process, that gets attention here.

With 18 of the 30 pieces on display, Jean Giguet (the curator's father) presents a mature, although largely unrecognized, vision. Not much is publicly known about the artist, but his work carries the signature of the desert. Born in the French Congo in 1947 and a Las Vegas resident from 1977 until his death in 1996, Giguet locates in a diptych of extremes: found plywood on one side, a desert-inspired monochrome on the other; photocopied bird carcass on one side, a cacti photo on the other. Even in his striking "Hunter-Gatherer and Scavenger" series—which superimposes girlie cards on photos of 19th-century Paiute women—the diptych's bifurcating line maintains a ghostly presence, just as bare-breasted Squaws haunt boobie ads.

Sensual, conceptual and witty by turns, Giguet's diptychs hinge on the tension between opposing picture planes. In "29," for example, weathered plywood couples with a vertically hung photo of Lake Mead; the wood grain imitates water (or cloud) patterns, while the lake morphs into a tree (or mushroom cloud). In "28," a nervy wire attaches to the center of the plywood like a 3D paint stroke,

sneakily divvying up the composition. Giguet wants the viewer to read the diptychs both horizontally and vertically, inviting a range of competitive interpretations. DK Sole's delicate sculptures are more understated and theatrical. Using the castoffs of daily life—bits of paper and plastic littered in the Las Vegas landscape—Sole constructs fragile works that reject the high-art aesthetic. In “odd that their acquaintance was so slight,” a tiny, heart-shaped bivalve made of discarded plastic cradles a coil of tape, while a synthetic thread suggestively dangles. The sculpture is so ephemeral, it seems on the verge of disappearing.

Troy Gillett's pieces, which largely rely on concept, are lost in the mixed intention of showcasing the found-object idiom and surveying Giguet, whose work demands a fuller accounting in a retrospective. Since each artist upcycles to a very different end, the show has a somewhat discordant feel, although individual works are strong. */found/* reminds us that the old cliché—art can be found everywhere—is actually true.