

Flash Art

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RY ROCKLEN

PARKER JONES - LOS ANGELES

Mixing Dadaist playfulness with multi-denominational spiritualism, "House of Return" finds Ry Rocklen turning the quotidian into objects of reverence. Each of the works in the exhibition combines banal second-hand household objects with a pious work ethic, where found objects like a mattress, curtain, carpet remnants or rubber ball are given an aggrandized mummification. Tilting a nod to Arte Povera artist Giovanni Anselmo or '60s sculpture by Robert Morris, Rocklen also utilizes acts of devotion and repetition to create a divine effect with the detritus from which his pieces are crafted.

Open Window, a sculpture made from a decomposing curtain emblazoned with the repeated word "Medium" has a strong yet ghostly presence, as if the cloth over a carcass-like armature attempts to channel the spirit world. *Turtle Soup* is formed from a deflated four-square ball and rocks, where concrete poured into the concave void left by a lack of air becomes a Star of David. The least transcendent piece, *Light Health Medalion 2*, is a rope hung exactly eight feet high with a meticulously painted disc, where the

artist's self-made mythology surrounding the amulet, amalgamated with a Thai Buddhist tradition of tying a string around structures, feels gimmicky.

However, with *Rise*, Rocklen redeems himself with a castaway mattress that recalls a slumping figure. Coated with a fastidious tile treatment similar to that of Byzantine smalti artists, the sheer physicality of the work covering the bed with blue, gray and white glass tiles is either a meditative exercise or a masochistic display of painstaking labor. The colored tiles create an obsessive simulacrum of the original pattern on the mattress that covers the whole structure, but for an edge of garish gold piping. Sending signals to the unearthly, Rocklen's numinous journey dexterously resolves tensions between concepts of recycling, nostalgia and mysticism with a notable combination of muscle and grace.

Annie Wharton

RY ROCKLEN, *House of Return*, 2009. Installation view at Parker Jones, Los Angeles. Courtesy Parker Jones, Los Angeles.

