

ARTslant

TO FIND AND THEN PERHAPS TO DEMOLISH WITH ANDREW BERARDINI

Rocklen in Chinatown

by Andrew Berardini

House of Return

Parker Jones

510 Bernard St., Los Angeles, CA
90012

September 9, 2009 - October 17, 2009

Ry Rocklen is a humble celebrator of the forgotten, a poet of the trashed, an elevator of the ruined, the scrapped, and the otherwise junked. Rocklen gives the second-hand a second life. In this exhibition, it is not the simple reclaiming of the trashed but a reinvention of them. A tattered sweatshirt found outside on the pavement, so smashed and gray it looked as if it were trying to become one of the pavement, is retrieved and bronzed. An institutional mattress, the kind reserved for the poor and the sick, is bent leaning forward, arrayed with glittering colored glass, likely mimicking the design that was originally woven into its cheap fabric. All of the objects on view are laid out on a careful pattern of cut carpet, it too reclaimed from its once inevitable conclusion at the dump.



Though these objects are touched up, Rocklen does so without denying their histories. The objects are not just the simple transformation of trash to treasure; here, their tattered histories are reconsidered, their tragic past celebrated for their texture. They do become art objects, but Rocklen's involvement isn't that of an artist that simply dumps trash in the gallery, a petty joke on the collecting class or one that simply loves objects for being objects, a superficial aesthetic materialist. He manages with this exhibition to make the trashed into treasure without making them any less trashed. It's a gentle gesture that makes one think that nothing too damaged or forgotten cannot be remade into something beautiful without denying the depth of its experience.