

Ian Pedigo

Artforum
December 2011
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ARTFORUM

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KLAUS VON NICHTSSAGEND GALLERY

An Article from Distant Memory, A Necklace of Broken Windows, Skeleton: The titles of Ian Pedigo's new sculptures and photographs—not to mention his use of shattered glass, driftwood, and bone—lent the artist's fourth solo appearance at this gallery an elegiac and slightly eerie mood. The artifacts and images that populated "Dawn Goes by Round the Neck" (the title is adapted from Surrealist poet Paul Éluard) have been altered via a series of offbeat formal tweaks and pairings that suggest a quietly experimental, performative approach to object making. But while the artist recasts his raw materials, he also lets each ingredient retain much of its original identity. The results, as the press release suggests, have an intimation of ritual.

Hung high in the narrow corridor that leads to the gallery proper was *The Upper Vaults* (all works 2011). Two partially sanded squares of metal are smeared with silver and lilac eye shadow and abutted to

form a diptych. Attached to each panel is a pattern of cow bones—dried-out stumps salvaged from a butcher in Queens—between which is threaded a set of colored shoelaces that traces a simple outline suggestive of two adjoining houses. It would be hard to formulate a more eccentric material quartet, yet *The Upper Vaults* doesn't feel gratuitously quirky. Rather, it underscores Pedigo's sensitivity to combinations that bypass easy logic en route to a more elusive engagement with the routinely jarring stratification of everyday life.

Dominating the gallery's high-ceilinged main space were two sculptures that made effective use of the room's vertical orientation. In *The Trails of Animals and Other Inanimate Things*, two rocks hang from the apex of a slender tripod that towers precariously above head height. The structure—a "found metal electrical conduit"—is daubed with paint and stands in a square of driftwood. Lines chalked onto the floor seemingly evince an attempt to trace the framework's shadow. There's a powerful hint of *Blair Witch Project*-style fetish—and

Beuysian shamanism—in the arrangement, an allusion, perhaps, to occult powers lying dormant within familiar things. As curator Chris Sharp writes in a new monograph on Pedigo, "if the work represents any kind of spirituality, it is of the homemade, decidedly ramshackle variety."

Nearby stood *A Necklace of Broken Windows*, a slightly more stable-looking, boothlike configuration of wood, Plexiglas, and colored lighting gels. Cables stretched across the interior of the assembly are strung with bone beads, and the clear front panel is smeared with white clay. The boxy whole has a vaguely functional air, but the clash of ancient and modern that seems to have occurred during its construction derails any notion of potential hands-on use. The sense, again, is of something more akin to a devotional site, an impression bolstered by the ethereal blue- and pink-tinted refractions that swim across the wall behind the work. The title gestures toward a narrative reading, but this is finally undermined by the words' overtly poetic mode.

Interspersed among the sculptures were three small, spectral prints, in which superimposed impressions of objects and figures, the built and the natural, struggle for visibility and prominence. Pedigo has cited—appreciatively—the impossibility of "containing" landscape within a static image, and in works like *River* and *Ice Flows*, he acknowledges this inherent flaw in figurative representation by deliberately muddying the waters, adding one pictorial layer too many. In both prints and sculptures, the density that results from this compulsive process of addition only emphasizes the fragility of each component part, and the value of giving the smallest moment our fullest attention.

—Michael Wilson

Ian Pedigo, *The Trails of Animals and Other Inanimate Things*, 2011, found metal electrical conduit, driftwood, white paint, black paint, black granite, ferrous slate, white chalk, yellow chalk, cable, hardware, 120 x 45 x 48".

