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ELANA HERZOG: RE CONSTRUCTIONS: SCULPTURE AND WORKS ON PAPER

By: Judy Ann Goldman

The Augustus Saint-Gaudens Memorial Site • Cornish, NH • nps.gov/saga • Through
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Elana Herzog, *Scratch the Surface*, 2013, plywood, wood, laminates, fiberboard, metal staples, textile, and hardware, dimensions variable. Photo: Alan Wiener. Courtesy of the artist and LMAKprojects, New York.

Elana Herzog is one of several artists working today whose installations draw from the pared down traditions of minimalism and the bravura experimentation of arte povera. A selection of her works currently on view in the Picture Gallery of the Augustus Saint-

Gaudens Memorial Site involve the artist's improvisational, performative action in their construction. Herzog's practice is to attach distressed discarded textiles such as old bedspreads, tablecloths or carpets directly to a wall using hundreds of metal staples. She then tears away at the fabric and selectively reapplies these cloth shreds with more staples, arriving at progressively dematerialized works she terms "sculptural drawings." The heavily built-up areas of cloth and dense patterns of metal staples play against the skin of the bare, perforated gallery wall, suggesting the precarious physical presence of her constructions. They are simultaneously being made and unmade, new forms emerging from the remains of the old.

Though Herzog's initial inspiration derives from the monolithic rectangles of Sixties abstract painting, she proceeds to challenge modernism's conventions of the integrity of the object by injecting references to the violent disregard and destruction of the planar surface. She describes her debt to modernism as both reverent and irreverent.

Also on view in this show are several new sculptural projects using handmade paper made at the Dieu Donné Papermill and a new (2013) site-specific installation called *Scratch the Surface*. This latter work, made from discarded wood scraps, laminates, textiles and hardware, is evidence of Herzog's continuing interest in art made from debris and the tensions and interactions that result when formal elements are disposed in an open-ended, fluctuating arena. Her process-based methods are a product of the artist's action and reaction to the realities at hand and can be read as a metaphor for the quandary of an artist faces with a bounty of materials and a plethora of possibilities.

Herzog lives in New York City and her poetic provocations have been exhibited recently at Smack Mellon in Dumbo, the Tang Museum in Sarasota and the Larry Aldrich Museum in Ridgefield.

—Judy Ann Goldman

- See more at: http://artnewengland.com/ed_review/elana-herzog-re-constructions-sculpture-and-works-on-paper/#sthash.8MaZxHhc.dpuf