

Liz Glynn

PAULA COOPER GALLERY | 197 TENTH AVENUE

197 Tenth Avenue

January 11–February 8

Informed by the surging piracy off the Somalian coast in 2013, during which ransoms drove profit margins for pirates, Liz Glynn’s New York debut showcases an economy of precariously assembled objects. A suspended, partially wrecked boat hull, *Vessel (Ravaged, Looted, & Burned)* (all works 2013), takes over the back gallery. Its wood-plank midsection has been ransacked and untidily reassembled, functioning purely to connect the boat’s undamaged front and rear. As an artwork, the wooden agglomeration gestures toward its functionality beyond material appearance—it won’t traverse bodies of water, but could still ride the market—speaking to the way trade exchanges are enabled by speculative, reputation-based values.



View of “On the Possibility of Salvage,” 2013.

Introducing the ship are thirteen papier-mâché sculptures, some of which rest on painted wooden boxes or forklift pallets, which bestrew the first gallery. Each recalls “treasured” objects from various historical eras. *Ming Porcelain (Wrecked, Looted, and Confiscated, South China Sea)* is a grouping of more than one hundred assorted plates and bowls decorated with flat reductive tribal patterns in indigo ink; some appear shattered. The papier-mâché—an inexpensive, popular medium—contrasts with each of their titles’ references to rarefied collectibles, adding an air of material impoverishment. Other works are installed within encasements, forsaking outright display. *Julius Caesar’s Purple Robes (Seized and Released, Aegean Sea)* is a violet-painted papier-mâché pleated robe positioned in a box with the cover removed. *Vessels from the Buen Jesus y Nuestra Senora del Rosario (Wrecked and Recovered, Florida Keys)* is an array of gray and pastel pitchers that are stored on shelves within a cavernous green crate, while others are displayed on the box top’s surface. Are these items goods for trade or goods held captive? This indeterminacy begets intrigue, and by titling the exhibition “On the Possibility of Salvage”, Glynn gestures at how modern piracy and art recover value through abstract economies. Replicas, fakes, or a shipwreck too can be worth its weight in gold.

— Nicolas Linnert