

Insight into Plessi

One is always thankful for the thoughtful reviews of art critic Mary Thomas. To continue the dialogue, I would like to respond to her comments on Fabrizio Plessi's exhibit at Wood Street Galleries (Feb. 5).

As a pioneer in the use of the video medium, Plessi can be understood as a video artist of the "old school." The video images within Plessi's monitor are actually derived from external sources; they come from players outside or hidden from the perceiver. In contrast, the video artists in the current Carnegie International are more involved with video image projection, and are less concerned with sculptural form or objectness. Such work is related to cinematic experience made spatial.

As a sculptor trained in the European figurative tradition, Plessi consistently creates an object that is then developed into multiples for larger installations tailored to particular venues. Many drawings in the show portray single objects, many of them based on the caryatid tradition that extends over the centuries through sculptors such as Michelangelo, Rodin, Brancusi and William Tucker. These works should not be seen as installations, but as site-related. One of Plessi's drawings depicts a sculpture consisting of one monitor and a shovel; it visualizes the prototype for the multiples that became the mesmerizing installation, "Bronx," in the second-floor gallery.

The array of two such prototypes, "Caryatid of the Poor" and "Liquid Crystal," which stand as sculptures in themselves, along with numerous drawings was not intended as an anemic offering of work out of context. Rather, it was designed, in consultation with the artist, to provide a distillation of Plessi's career and development. The singularity of the sculptures had nothing to do with budget restraints (although any arts institution welcomes more funding). This component of Plessi's exhibit gives insight into both his creative process and his versatility. We hope the public will come to see for themselves.

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