

Liz Glynn: The Archaeology of Another Possible Future



Liz Glynn, *To Orient*, 2016
Seven 3-D printed gypsum and nylon elements in powder-coated steel tool box
36 x 22 x 4 in. (91.4 x 55.9 x 10.2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — Los Angeles-based **Liz Glynn** will present her largest and most ambitious project to date in Building 5, MASS MoCA's largest gallery — a sprawling multi-sensory sculptural experience of sight, sensation, sound, and scent stretching nearly a football field in length. ***The Archaeology of Another Possible Future*** expands Glynn's interest in the rise and fall of empires, labor, and shifting cultural values, in order to speculate upon our uncertain future. The multi-level presentation in the museum's former factory space examines the loss of material economies in the wake of digital commerce, robotic manufacturing, and the rise of the service sector. *The Archaeology of Another Possible Future* will open on October 8, 2017, with a reception for the artist and members on Saturday, October 7, from 5:30 to 7:30pm. The exhibition will remain on view through Labor Day 2018.

Glynn's MASS MoCA exhibition responds to an economy, in the artist's words, in which "technology companies seem to generate billion-dollar valuations out of thin air, nanotechnology operates beyond the field of the visually apprehensible, and capital is accumulated as pure concept." In this increasingly virtual world, Glynn seeks to reconcile the presence

of physical bodies and individual subjectivities, emphasizing the experience of physical movement through space in real time. The show unfolds in five chapters and two appendixes, opening with primitive sensory experiences and culminating in the glistening image of a postindustrial economy.

The labyrinthine exhibition opens with three caves made of shipping pallets — pyramids, within which visitors discover intimate sensory experiences of touch, sound, and scent. Highlights of the *Analog Caves* include accumulations of industrial felt and hanging stalactites that engulf viewers in a cushiony maze; slip-cast ceramic vessels in the altered shape of platonic solids, each containing an evocative smell; and an analog vinyl record produced for the exhibition with no digital processing. For the second chapter of the exhibition, *The Shape of Progress*, Glynn has created a series of formally abstract sculptures made from contemporary materials and industrial detritus that translate theories of historical progression and

data — often visualized as graphs or charts — into three-dimensional forms scaled to the human body. As in many of Glynn’s works and values, material becomes a catalyst to question the nature of historical progress. A sculpture housing live monarch butterflies references the butterfly effect as applied to world economics. The third chapter of the exhibition features three shipping containers in hues of red, green, and blue. The containers house three distinct installations, including a series of plans for failed inventions and obsolete technologies, videos exploring different speculative visions of the future, and a job-site office recalling those of a bygone era. Emblazoned with the names of Capital Intermodal and the now bankrupt Hanjin shipping company, the containers function as relics of a global economy in acute transition. Periodically, the containers will house “caretakers” who, drawing from their personal experience in manufacturing or industry, will explain how things work.

Progressing to the fourth chapter of the installation, *The Age of Ephemeralization*, a system of catwalks places visitors high above the gallery floor. Viewers can access the raised pathway via the mezzanine gallery or stairs that lead up from the ground floor to three scaffolding towers, where industrial 3-D printers developed by Formlabs will produce objects designed by Glynn. Visitors traversing the upper levels will have a bird’s eye view of the industrial artifacts below — a precarious perspective evoking the spectacle (and fear) of the new dematerialized economy. With this shift in vantage points, the viewer might consider our recent history as an archaeology of all the “stuff” that will cease to exist in the digital age. Below the catwalks, in a final chapter, lies a dystopic, post-industrial vacationland for the workers whose labor has become obsolete, inspired in part by Aldous Huxley’s writings about a future era of automated labor. The installation features a series of sculpturally modified stainless steel stretchers-cum-lounge chairs and cast stainless steel tumbleweeds. What will we do, the show asks, if robots do it all for us?

The exhibition continues with two “footnotes,” which include a timeline of 3-D printed tools — dating from prehistory through the industrial revolution — sculpted by hand, scanned, and output with a 3-D printer. Highlighting the notion of technology as an extension of the hand, the timeline acts to join the two worlds built within the exhibition. In a second-floor gallery — reached at the end of the visitor’s exploration of the installation or via the catwalks suspended in the main gallery — Glynn will present stacks of newsprint posters, which visitors are invited to take. The posters are printed with images and text offering questions and statements about the nature of human control and the position of the human body within an advanced technological society.



Liz Glynn, *To Sow*, 2016
 Nine 3-D printed gypsum and nylon elements in powder-coated steel tool box
 36 x 22 x 4 in. (91.4 x 55.9 x 10.2 cm)
 From the Technological Toolboxes series
 Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

Publication

In conjunction with the exhibition, MASS MoCA will publish the first monograph of Glynn's work in association with DelMonico Books/Prestel. *Liz Glynn: Objects & Actions* features images and texts documenting sculptures, installations, and performative works made by the artist over the past decade, including the installation at MASS MoCA. The lavishly illustrated publication will also feature essays by MASS MoCA Curator Susan Cross; Connie Butler, Chief Curator at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and José Luis Blondet, Curator of Special Projects at LACMA, Los Angeles. The monograph is designed by Jessica Fleischmann of still room studio, Los Angeles.

About The Artist

Liz Glynn was born in Boston, Mass., in 1981. She received her B.A. from Harvard College in 2003, and her M.F.A. from the California Institute of Arts in 2008. She has presented exhibitions, participatory performances, and installations across the U.S. and Europe. Most recently, she created *Open House*, an installation for the Public Art Fund in New York City's Central Park. She has had solo exhibitions at LACMA (2015), which grew out of an earlier series of performances exploring monumental works of sculpture in the museum's collection. Her work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including SculptureCenter, New York (2014); Artpace, San Antonio (2014); MOCA, Los Angeles (2011); and Arthouse, Austin (2009). Glynn's work has been included in group exhibitions, including *Pacific Standard Time* organized by the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2012); migrating public art project *Station to Station* (2013); *Made in LA* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2012); *Performa 11*, New York (2011); and *The Generational: Younger Than Jesus* at the New Museum, New York (2009). Glynn is represented by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Sponsorship

Major exhibition support is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, Formlabs, Girardi Distributors LLC, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, the Barr Foundation, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Guido's Fresh Marketplace, and The Berkshire Eagle.

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Images

A collection of high-resolution images is available here: bit.ly/2wxX5Xs.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making, displaying, and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. MASS MoCA nearly doubled its gallery space in spring 2017, with artist partnerships that include Laurie Anderson, the Louise Bourgeois Trust, Jenny Holzer, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, and James Turrell.

Gallery admission is \$20 for adults, \$18 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is seasonal and currently on view. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

Summer Hours (through September 4)

10am to 6pm, Sundays—Wednesdays

10am to 7pm, Thursdays—Saturdays