Michael Petry

THE TOUCH OF THE ORACLE
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March 17 – July 29, 2012

The Touch of the Oracle features three monumental site-specific installations – Golden Rain, Joshua D’s Wall, and The Dilemma. These artworks provide an opportunity for audiences to experience installation-based conceptual artworks by Michael Petry, who draws inspiration from art history, mythology, and contemporary culture. Each distinct piece relates and interacts with the others and the visitors, creating an environment filled with sound and visual complexity.

Petry does not actually create his individual art objects, but rather seeks out highly skilled crafts people with whom he collaborates to illuminate his conceptual ideas. For these installations, he has worked with an inspired team of glass blowers to create works that require a high level of technical expertise.

Golden Rain is an installation of 100 gold mirrored droplet-shaped glass vessels that reference the Greek myth of Danae, impregnated by the god Zeus in the form of a golden rain shower. Petry invited 100 international artists to place an artwork, poem, object, or text inside one of the mirrored bottles, asking them to imagine being locked in a tower and having the bottle as their only means of communication. Petry then permanently sealed the mirrored bottles, leaving their contents hidden.

Joshua D’s Wall features a field of 250 hand-blown glass stones that are scattered over the gallery’s floor. Joshua D’s Wall alludes to the Biblical story of Joshua and the crumbling walls of Jericho. Resembling small boulders, these glass stones evoke the earth’s magma and the many colors found therein, as well as Petry’s own artistic impression of the natural environment. When visiting the museum, he was astounded by the lava rock that forms the walls of the museum’s building. Petry’s work is a direct response to the Palm Springs Art Museum’s architecture and its location near Joshua Tree National Park.

The Dilemma is a sound piece that plays periodically throughout the gallery and offers up the possibility of sound as a work of art in and of itself. Using text by Petry set to music by John Powell and Gavin Greenaway, the piece features female and male voices singing a dialogue. The piece’s colloquial themes are inspired by Palm Springs’s historic connection to film and Hollywood.

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101 Museum Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262
760-322-4800
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Installation photography by Lani Garfield.
L'Age d'Or, 2012
Gold coin and perfume
48 x 15 mm

The Golden Age, 2006
24 carat gold wire
8mm diameter