



Vague 'Nouvelle Vague'

June 22, 2014



A random found object acting as trigger to a creative response is a well-trodden path. In the exhibition *The French Diplomat's Office* by Barbara Bloom the found object is a painting acquired in a flea market in Paris which indeed leads to a well trodden office carpet. The found watercolour painting is a banal interior design. A rendering of a 1950s office furnished in quasi-classical style with traditional furniture but with half abstracted Modernist shapes on the carpet. There is no one present. This room is then replicated and realised in the gallery space of the Project Arts Centre as form of depersonalised tableau vivant in absentia.



Except it's not really explicitly replicated. There are painted panels to mimic the walls, a rug to represent the carpet but they fail to convey meaning. The whole construct lacks the nostalgic pathos of the originally imagined room. Paintings are missing from the walls of this theatre set but their absence is seen in the unfaded paint rectangles whilst furniture is removed but their traces are left in recessed imprints. It's crude and obvious. Particularly so with the replication of footprints across the carpet which have been clumsily cut into the pile. These form tracks of a male and obviously female set of shoes that describe a narrative as they traverse the room. Halfway across the footprints stop, very close and intimate. There is an obvious pause of liaison between the imaginary characters. They then move on to finish side-by-side across the room at the imagined window. A post-coital cigarette moment perhaps. But this is lazy, hazy innuendo and no more. Grandeur allusions could have been portrayed but this is the extent of the tableau.



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If you need respite from the hi-culture fest and hurly-burly that is Temple Bar and you don't want to walk anymore in high-heels on cobbles then go and sit down on the free chairs in the Project Arts Centre. Whilst there, the narrative you may perhaps conceive of your own volition, will be far more intriguing than this slight French affair.

The French Diplomat's Office staged, Barbara Bloom, continues at the Project Arts Centre, Dublin until the 28th June.
All photos Project Arts Centre, Dublin.