

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Schwendener, Martha. 'Amie Siegel, "The Spear in the Stone"', *The New York Times* Online. 9 June 2016.

The New York Times

Amie Siegel, 'The Spear in the Stone'



A scene from Amie Siegel's 2016 video "Fetish." Courtesy of the artist and Simon Preston Gallery, New York

Amie Siegel is one of the quiet giants of research-based film and video, and she is in top form in her current exhibition, "The Spear in the Stone," at the Simon Preston Gallery. In recent videos, Ms. Siegel has examined the rarefied but drone-like atmosphere of architects' offices and the migration of a Modernist chair design through different international contexts. The two new works here continue her investigation into how culture is made, studied and preserved.

"Fetish" (2016), a 10-minute high-definition video, shows workers silently dusting, vacuuming and reassembling the furniture and artifacts in Sigmund Freud's office — now a museum — in London. "Double Negative" (2015), a 17-minute video and accompanying 16-millimeter films running on two projectors, focuses on two versions of Le Corbusier's Modernist Villa Savoye: the original white building in France and a black copy made of Cor-Ten steel in Australia that houses an institute for Aboriginal studies.

Ms. Siegel's work has a crispness and an economy that recall the deadpan, documentary style of German photographers like Thomas Struth and Candida Höfer and the slow, measured pace of Jane and Louise Wilson's films. In Freud's office, the careful dusting of his artifacts (with a paintbrush, no less) becomes a wry, accidental illustration of his own theories about fetishism, while "Double Negative," whose title echoes that of an earthwork in Nevada by the artist Michael Heizer, pivots on a number of complicated binaries: white versus black, modern versus "primitive," colonial versus indigenous.

Luckily, Ms. Siegel doesn't go didactic on us. Instead, she provides access to spaces filled with complications and paradoxes and leaves us to draw our own conclusions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/06/10/arts/design/art-galleries-nyc.html>

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