

B. LYNCH: THE RED AND THE GREY

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The *Red and the Grey* is a tale of the haves and the have-nots, and their roles through history. Artist B. Lynch, a professor of studio art at Simmons College who directs the Trustman Gallery there, has cooperated with the historical museum to use artifacts in its collection to provide her fabricated figures ("two factions" she calls them) with appropriate props. And the artifacts, like the figures, also denote class and station.

One example is *The Dandy and The Queen* who are shown in an elegant setting with a portrait of the dandy, an antique sideboard and a willow pattern platter, all possessions of their aristocratic owners. The artist has fabricated small versions of objects in the collection that are also on view nearby. Lynch's skill in the creation of her characters and installations is a brilliant evocation of material culture.

The figures and accoutrements are installed on shelves with elegant wallpaper



B. Lynch, *Queen* (closeup), 2012, paper, paint, mixed media, 9.5" standing.

for the Reds and a somber background for the workaday Greys. With paper, paint, wire and wood the artist creates an Alice in Wonderland world come to life with skill, and imagination.

In contrast to the well-to-do characters the have-nots are in grey with humble tools: a two-person saw, a bicycle, pots and pans, all rendered in monotone. These are figures like a cleaning woman (*Pail Lady*), a cook, a garbage collector. One figure, the orator, holding a book, seems to be advocating for the oppressed. Could the book be *Das Kapital*?

Lynch's art is the art of social protest and an exposure of inequality and exploitation through the ages. She portrays figures with animal features, such as a wolf and a horse that take the viewer far into a world of folly and history. She echoes contemporary concerns about the unequal distribution of wealth and the shame of poverty in the wealthiest nation in the world. Alongside a lightness of spirit there is real pathos in this presentation of a world of the privileged and the exploited through history. Created with compassion, originality and wit, Lynch's tableaux are metaphors for society. —**Alicia Faxon**