

A Forged Civilization

The Civilization of Llhuros | A.D.White Museum at Cornell University
Cornell Daily Sun | January 28, 1972

Borges' Tlön, Joyce's Dublin, or R. Crumb's elastic city? Parody harrows style down to the streets of yet another mysterious civilization, Llhuros, which has recently come to light at the White Museum. A spiritual heir of the creator of the Cardiff Giant, Norman Daly has brought us a teeming vision of the abuses a disintegrated culture can undergo.

A five year effort has culminated in an astounding collection of the steles, votives, and refuse of an endearing people. As they pursued a simple life of licentious rites and stilt-walking, we can only hope they forgive their interpreters.

Daly has guessed correctly that interest in his work is heightened by the resistance thrown up around it. The images and their patina are those of a master forger; his ready-mades ingeniously trespass the realm of archaeological find. And the poetry which complements the exhibit is hilariously self-confessional – it should send one running to burn their haiku.

But Llhuros is hardly imitative; nothing has ever existed like it. It questions the motive of a modish primitivism, the decadent's turn to other cultures to revive his own exhausted tastes. It stands to show that the anthropologist's art historian's vertical drop into a chance object or ritual may very well be a pratfall. The footnotes and apologia of academia are brought to trial and shown for what they are—categories that wreak havoc on a more innocent reality.

It is not easy to turn away from Llhuros to the business of the university: it's enough to make those who mine the caverns of *Olin wonder what they're doing in the dark.

** The central library at Cornell University*

—Mary Jane McKenvin

Cornell Sun - Fri. 1/28/72

Review

A Forged Civilization

By MARY JANE McKINVEN

THE CIVILIZATION OF LLHUROS. An exhibition of artifacts. At the ANDREW DICKSON WHITE MUSEUM Jan. 25 - March 5.

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