

ARTILLERY

features reviews columns calendar roll call

et cetera



MATERIAL AS METAPHOR AND BETYE SAAR

by Ezrha Jean Black ·

June 1, 2017 · in

There's an enormous tension between the two shows currently on view at the **Craft & Folk Art Museum**; yet each resonates all the more powerfully for the juxtaposition. While *Material As Metaphor* is emphatically abstract, and *Keepin' It Clean* explicitly grounded in the physical, historical actuality of African-American enslavement and oppression, both

are earth-bound in their materiality (even **Lisa Soto's** construction of seemingly ricocheting bullet casings and fishing line, *The shortest distance between two points...* (2016-17) underscores what constitutes those points and how that distance is traversed) and conscious of the inevitability of their intersections and their very real consequences. A few of the artists here work with industrial felt, following to some extent in **Robert Louis's** capacious footsteps, but moving in very different directions. **Kay Whitney** gestures towards a gravity-defying skyward upsurge with her *Skyhook* (2016), but its waves of felt ribbons are wrapped around the distinctly organic plywood shapes that form

THE MAGAZINE



Editor's Letter
Table of Contents
Back Issues
Join Our Mailing List

SUBSCRIBE

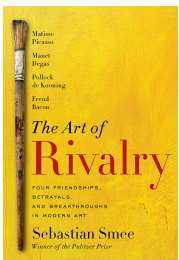
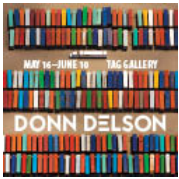
Search Artillery

f LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Follow us on TWITTER

Follow us on INSTAGRAM





its base – themselves perched upon spiky legs. **Lloyd Hamrol**, who has previously worked with industrial felt to brilliant sculptural and spatial effect, presents a site-specific *Cascade* of umber industrial felt that both implicates the immediate context of the Museum, while implying a world and dimensions beyond it, including the world outside. (The *déluge* is not ‘après nous,’ but right before us.) **Senga Nengudi**, whose work (using pantyhose) has always implied movement and spatial extension, here shifts her focus more directly not simply to the body (which is always implied), but to its specific charge and contact points, its intersections and their configuration, reminding us how palpably such tensions can register. **Victoria May**’s work in contrasting hard and shiny (rubber inner-tubing) and soft opaque (silk) coils are a kind of crash of the organic and synthetically manufactured worlds – an explosion of corruption and decay – a hard-soft scream at the *Alien* always present amongst us. ‘Have at us,’ they seem to imply. In stark contrast, **Betye Saar**’s vintage washboard reconstructions, variously painted, printed, and collaged are a caution to the free-fall fest upstairs. “We was mostly ‘bout survival,” many of them remind us – something the culture-at-large seems to be re-learning in its current nose-dive into crash-and-burn chaos.

Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM)
5814 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Show runs thru August 20, 2017

Tags: Betye Saar, Craft & Folk Art Museum, Kay Whitney, Lisa C. Soto, Lloyd Hamrol, May Wilson, Senga Nengudi, Victoria May

Leave a Reply

