



UP the ANTE.

Material And Process Exalted At Equity Gallery's FemiNest, Curated By Melinda Wang + Heather Zises
March 17, 2017

Soft cascades and sharp angles meet the viewer head-on in equal measure at FemiNest, a group exhibition of work by women artists on view at Equity Gallery through Saturday, March 25. A formidable tour of the possibilities present within contemporary sculpture, assemblage and painting, the artists - Natalie Frank, Karen Lee Williams, Michele Oka Doner, Barbara Segal, Page Turner & Vadis Turner – each produce confounding and challenging works.

An array of practices trace artistic development through a variety of materials: hard marble sculptures are situated near assemblage works incorporating wood and fabric, while soft sculpture and resin-covered fabric 2-D sculptures vie for attention at the gallery's entry. The clever and cogent curation of these works brings these artworks to life in an appropriate dialogue around what constitutes "feminine" and "feminist" art.

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Karen Lee Williams, L->R: MAW - Violence in Mind (2017) and MAW - Bile (2017), both cotton cord, dye and steel

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Entering the gallery, the viewer is presented with structured, 2-D fabric sculptures created from re-purposed ribbon and, intermittently, resin. Based in Nashville, TN, artist Vadis Turner works with upcycled textiles to create abstract and tactile 2-D sculptures that examine complex histories of material and process which also navigate and unpack the loaded meaning of "women's work". By incorporating sections of resin into her work, Turner blurs the lines between hard and soft, craft and high art, indelibly questioning why these binaries exist to begin with.

Arranged in close proximity to Turner's complex pieces are Karen Lee Williams' soft sculpture series, Maws, in which simple forms and implied movement delineate the lines between inviting and sinister structures. Using only dyed cotton rope and steel, these works offer the illusion of giving and receiving in turn: wrapping cord through a steel hoop that reaches down into darkness with one Maw while approaching the visitor's feet with another piece. These loose, abstract pieces provoke a visceral response with their simplicity of material and minimal use of form.