

artillery

KILLER TEXT ON ART

Abigail Deville / Christine Wang

Night Gallery

October, 2012



Abigail Deville, "If I don't think I'm sinking, look what a hole I'm in," installation view, 2012

LOCATED ON THE EDGE OF LINCOLN HEIGHTS, NIGHT GALLERY has a *Twilight Zone* atmosphere that Abigail Deville emphasizes with the inside-out quality of her new installation "If I don't think I'm sinking, look what a hole I'm in," within which, works by Christine Wang from her series "Repetition Compulsion" were freely integrated.

Like an exploded deck or a desiccated swamp, Deville has damped down the gallery's lighting to a murky hue with shredded blue tarps only partially alleviated by corrugated plastic or fiberglass screening elements. Brown fan palm fronds give way to a haphazard array of 2 x 4s and wood fragments, hedges of cardboard pieces, variously cut up or painted, dangling cables and strips of sheet metal. The space is

arranged elliptically along a certain passageway threading through its segments. It is possible to see through certain sections to the rear of the space. In the "clearing" closest to the entrance is an upended spa tub and emerging from it a dried-up Christmas fir tree, which looks to be from 2011.

In another section of the installation, what appears to be the rear bumper and taillight section of an automobile body is suspended. Colorless but for a wash of umber paint that seems to be splashed everywhere—more jungle camouflage for this interior urban jungle—it suggests a more violent rupture of the space. Overall, the violence here is simply spent and dissipated, not latent—evidence from an archaeological dig (albeit a recent one). The "hole" contains other explicit elements hanging amid the cables and rubber strips: effigy fragments; legs in women's footwear. A cluster of text paintings placed in one corner toward the rear of the installation—"I LOVE RAPE PORN" (alternatively I [heart] RP), and "IT'S MY FAULT IF YOU HURT ME"—added yet another spin.

Yet it is still unclear how the artist's (or gallery's) gloss alluding to an "alien race" alighting in Lincoln Heights connects to these moments. It seems, at the very least, disingenuous.

If there is anything "alien" to Deville's installation, it is the round painting and mixed media "tondos" dispersed toward the rear of the installation (two in a small annex in the gallery) by Christine Wang, which offer their own brilliantly cheeky visual comment on the hole, alien or all too distinctly carnal. Composed of long latex strips in livid purplish-reds, pinks, off-white, threaded through with glitter in tightly spaced parallel strips across what looks like a wood turntable or circular panel, they turn free-fall into full-stop. *This* is where it ends: the whirling (or wheeling) half-tone blur of a thousand blurred orgasms, a Catherine wheel firework (or diaphragm) for our misapprehended explorations. Wang's titles are appropriately poignant: e.g., *Sewn by People from Craigslist: Different Color Bleeds the Same Red*. The deceptively cartoonish, demotic *Pool Painting*—emblazoned with the phrase "Who Needs Sex When There's A Pool?"—effectively remixes the notion of word painting, to say nothing of "sinking" (or rising or falling) through a hole. It's one way for her to stay afloat on a sinking ship.

- Ezrha Jean Black