

Sally Smart "Decoy Nest"



This event has ended.

At [Postmasters Gallery](#)

Media: [Installation](#)

Sally Smart is known for her often monumental scale assemblage installations applied directly to the wall. Decoy Nest - a centerpiece of the show - represents a huge sprawling tree "inhabited" by people, body parts, and camouflaged objects. Occupying a main wall of the gallery this 15 x 33 feet artwork is an intricate, complex collage and photo-montage cut-out made from painted canvas, printed fabric and photographic segments (tree bark, human figures and foliage). The installation engages the viewer in a hide-and-seek game to locate recognizable elements within the composition where human limbs often extend the twigs and tree branches. Decoy Nest is accompanied by two other collage cut-out works, Twilight Tree and Phantom (limb) Tree.

About her new project Smart says:

This series of work has developed from my long-term interest in representations of the tree, with reference to contemporary and historical models, namely the tree house, family tree, tree of life and the tree of knowledge. Most recently my thinking has been organized around literal and metaphorical iconography of the tree and pressing ecological concerns with a tree as a symbolic stand-in for nature.

It was while traveling in Belgium last year and noticing the bird nests in trees along the freeways, that I learned of the 'decoy nest', the strategy that birds use to deflect attention from their precious eggs.

In thinking about the idea of a decoy (masking, camouflage and metamorphosis) I began to draw connections to my art practice, in the strategies I used in conveying and creating meaning.

Decoy Nest is about making a visual construction of ideas like mapping, diagramming, charting, or planning; but it remains open, showing the process of that kind of working, drawing, assembling.

I imagine picturing thinking about the meanings of the world; inevitably the discourse begins with the body, a forensic activity, an external and internal examination of the parts, displaying what is seen, including the parts of the body's environment: clothes, house, furniture, landscape. This becomes an anatomy of the world lesson; where dissected parts are examined and reconstructions are made for explanations. Inevitably the conclusion is like a puzzle-picture: a maze of fugitive parts; tree parts become human parts, and body parts become abstract.

Discussing the ephemeral character of Smart's installations, Melissa Miles writes:

By emphasizing the pins and joins that connect each of her formal components, Smart makes visible the highly physical and performative processes of collecting, cutting, reconstructing and pinning through which her work is produced. This performative quality is reiterated by the figure that appears towards the top of Decoy Nest, a photograph of Smart herself. Layers of practice, material and metaphor overlap and double back in this nest, as Smart's practice of pinning forms a decoy whose meaning cannot ultimately be pinned down.

Schedule

From 2008-09-06 To 2008-10-11

Opening Reception on 2008-09-06 from 18:00 to 20:00

Artist(s)

Sally Smart

Fee

Free

Venue Hours

From 11:00 To 18:00

Closed on Mondays, Sundays, Holidays

Access

Between 9th and 10th Ave., Subway: A/C/E to 14th Street or L to 8th Avenue.

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