

CRITICS' PICKS



Rebecca Brewer, *Silent Running*, 2018, wool felt, aluminum hooks, steel chain, 15 1/2 x 5 x 1'.

VANCOUVER “Nature”

CATRIONA JEFFRIES
274 East 1st Avenue
January 26 - March 3

Rebecca Brewer’s wool felt collage *Silent Running*, 2018, is hung like a specimen stretched out for examination. The textile is organized through the interlacings of a grid in which the dead matter of nature has accumulated above and below the surface—suspended, ossified, floating. The work resembles a net that has trawled through the ocean, corralling what looks like flotsam and jetsam.

The closest sculptural equivalent to this hanging textile is Eva Hesse’s *Contingent*, 1969, a work whose fragility is

counterbalanced by the associative violence of the hooks that hold the piece in place. Like *Contingent*, *Silent Running* is made visually dynamic in part by its invitation to take in the work on the move. On one side, the grid is placed in the foreground and the colors of the debris are murky and muted, as if viewed through water; on the other side, these same objects are rendered in a glimmering phosphorescence. Below the surface, the underside of dead matter is not merely dead but all aglow.

Brewer’s textile acts as pivot in this group exhibition, which also includes work by Charmian Johnson, Rochelle Goldberg, and Christina Mackie. In *Composite Tangle #2* and *Composite Tangle #3*, both 2016, Goldberg reworks what looks like the interweaving of thick vines to serve as the texture of her figural sculptural practice, whereas Johnson’s drawings of orchids, foxgloves, and other flora (like Goldberg) intuit the labyrinthine patterns of nature.

An additional painting by Brewer, *Whole Body Organizing*, 2018, extends the artist’s attraction to the radiance of twilight scenes. This vision is not new in Vancouver and is also found in the work of local painters Alison Yip and Megan Hepburn. Brewer’s landscape—evoked through dark chiaroscuro and fluorescence—depicts a state keyed to a witching hour, of sorts, where the day’s events become somewhat strange, if not slightly transformed.

— Andrew Witt