

ROSAMUND FELSEN GALLERY

Los Angeles Times

A Tonic Against the Inauthentic

September 17, 2010 | D21

Responding to the sense of alienation in art that she felt had been fostered by modernism, historian and critic Suzi Gablik made a case for "The Reenchantment of Art" in her book by that title, published in 1991. She called for a renewal of art's social responsibility and moral purpose, a reconnection with its roots in myth and archetype. Though Gablik voiced her concerns about the soulless state of art nearly two decades ago, that despair is just as easily invoked by much of the insular, over-schooled and hyper-strategic work that fills galleries today.

Which is why Nancy Jackson's new work at Rosamund Felsen feels so restorative, so truly enchanting. Jackson's show, as ever, is an event for the spirit, invigorating in its authenticity. A group of mobiles, all-white, floor-to-ceiling cascading rings, dangling dots, loops and fringe, is breathtaking, both blatantly festive and quietly sublime. Made of paper, Styrofoam, aluminum, polymer clay, thread, monofilament and glass, they hint at the mystical and also the musical, while testifying to the fundamental human impulse toward ornamentation.



Nancy Jackson
Untitled (small mobile) 5., 2010
Paper, polymer clay, wire, styrofoam, thread, monofilament
58 x 9 1/2" diameter
Photo: Grant Mudford



Nancy Jackson
The Black Sculpture, 2010
Paper, wood, plastic, glass, with polymer clay, aluminum, ink and aluminum paint, acrylic, gouache
18 1/4 x 18 1/2 x 13 1/2"
Photo: Credit: Grant Mudford

In one room, six of the mobiles are offset by a group of shiny black, vaguely animal heads on tubular, velvet necks protruding from a painted dark patch on one wall. Comic and grotesque, with sly smiles and ridiculous hats, the pack looks slightly crazed, as if malevolent forces were intruding upon the sanctity of those ethereal, gently twirling white confections, sully the innocence and purity of the assembly, and playing out a primal conflict between light and darkness. Jackson's ink and gouache drawings, too, often set beauty against death. Strange, fantastic and darkly funny, they affirm Jackson's commitment to an art of exquisite craft, complex beauty and a deeply human sense of fear and wonder.

- Leah Ollman