

## “Awakening” to the Work of Seven Simpatico Painters

In the recent group exhibition, “Awakening,” a group of diverse talents interpreted an intriguing theme.

Kathryn Hart transforms pictorial space with rugged mixed media compositions, such as “Veiled Attempt.” This large work in burlap, wood and objects, like most of Hart’s compositions, merges painting and sculpture with often unsettling subject matter in a manner that caused one viewer to comment, “She’s like a more abstract Francis Bacon.”

An astute insight; for Hart’s compositions, if not as figuratively explicit in their imagery — or anywhere near as blatantly grotesque — as Bacon’s, are similarly transgressive, with odd protrusions, such as the empty paint-smearred frame of canvas stretchers in “Veiled Attempt,” jutting from the main body of the piece like bones through flesh.

“Midnight Diaries,” a mixed media work on wood panel, in a predominantly black, white, and red palette, comes across as viscerally as one of Hannibal Lechter’s nightmares. With its thick clots of tar-black pigment, splashes of white dripping over areas of red, and coils of wire springing from its craggy surface like exposed veins, it has a Grand Guignol violence, perhaps influenced by the fact that Hart grew up the daughter of a plastic surgeon who occasionally allowed her to watch his performances in the operating theater. In Hart’s “Dialogue with a Madwoman,” a cloth form resembling a dead chicken painted black and suspended upside down by its feet appears tethered like a spider to its web to a large open frame by a maze of knotted wire and thread. Casting its shadow eerily on the gallery wall, like all of Kathryn Hart’s recent work this is strong stuff, not for the squeamish.

--- Byron Coleman



“Midnight Diaries”



“Veiled Attempt”

“Awakening,” recently seen at New Century Artists Gallery, 530 West 25th Street., NY, NY