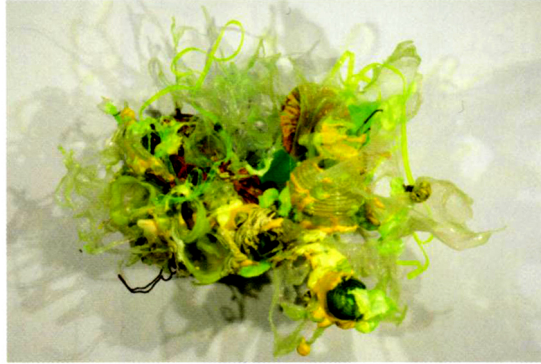


ARTNEWS

February 2015



Judy Pfaff, *Belle Isle*, 2014. melted plastic, paper lanterns, pigmented expanded foam, acrylic, and resin, 50" x 61" x 32". Loretta Howard.

JUDY PFAFF

LORETTA HOWARD AND PAVEL ZOUBOK
OCTOBER 18 - NOVEMBER 15

82

One of modernism's most durable dichotomies opposes nature to culture. Judy Pfaff's spectacular two-venue exhibition paid homage to the distinction between the forces of nature and the effects of human activity, but what was most strongly conveyed was the chaos that comes from their intermingling. The Zoubok show, titled "Second Nature," employed natural and "unnatural" materials—insulation foam, resin, bone, leaves—to create wall-hung and suspended sculptures evoking unbridled nature, while a net of metal tendrils in the center of the gallery entangled two pieces of gnarled driftwood. Wall works evoked fantastic undersea landscapes or bizarre fungi, and large collages made reference to art history and 19th-century field guides and botanical illustrations.

"Run Amok," at Loretta Howard, investigated the experimental geometries of modern art. Here the works displayed brilliant and even garish colors and occasionally neon lights. Some titles referred to mid-century abstraction, and the sculptures featured Op-like concentric circles or layers of translucent plastic. Several landscape-like sculptures suspended from the ceiling were overrun with whiplash-green lights. Though formally distinct, the shows shared an explosive exuberance. Yet they also expressed an undercurrent of disquiet.

ELEANOR HEARTNEY