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ART IN REVIEW

Michelle Segre: 'Lost Songs of the Filament'

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Derek Eller Gallery



Derek Eller Gallery, NY

"Transmissions of the Threadbare," one of Michelle Segre's large sculptures.

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An air of productive impatience permeates [Michelle Segre's](#) solo show. This maker of essentially realist and relatively monolithic sculptures of enlarged but familiar forms began in the early 1990s with works that owe much to Vija Celmins. (I remember a slice of bread the size of a small mattress with a meticulously painted surface.)

Increasing weirdness followed, including extra-large, intensely colored fungi and objects suggestive of gnarly Neolithic fetishes or disembodied eyeballs, but in the main, single forms, slightly surreal realism and worked surfaces prevailed.

Now, building on two pieces shown at the Derek Eller Gallery in 2010, Ms. Segre has essentially blown her work apart and amped up her ambition in the process. It is a good thing to see. Her latest efforts are highly porous, freewheeling, somewhat crazed assemblages. They involve plaster and papier-mâché as well as coils of wire mesh and screenlike forms loosely woven from wire or colored yarn. Found objects are involved (rocks, seashells, pitchforks, an old mailbox), as are some of her earlier pieces, in the case of the large sculptures of bones in "Let Me Love Your Brain" and "Transmissions of the Threadbare."

The intense color continues but is dispersed, and the interest in Surrealism has segued from Magritte to Calder and [Miró](#), but there is also attention to such Process Art achievements as Alan Shields's strung and beaded constructions and Lynda Benglis's oozing biomorphism, along with all kinds of outsider art.

Ms. Segre may also be responding to the fertile pressure of the sculptural peregrinations of contemporaries like Rachel Harrison, Jim Lambie and Jessica Jackson Hutchins. That her work is more improvisational and historically omnivorous and less conceptually programmatic than theirs creates a different, perhaps implicitly broader field of possibilities.