

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Los Angeles Times



Culture Monster

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME

Art review: Nancy Rubins @ Gagosian Gallery

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Eat your heart out, Georgia O'Keeffe. Two mega-sculptural blossoms by **Nancy Rubins** will see your delicate paintings of flowers and raise the ante a couple thousand pounds.

At Gagosian Gallery, Rubins lashed together several dozen aluminum rowboats and kayaks with thickly twisted strands of heavy wire. She has planted these monumental assemblage sculptures in the concrete floor, where they have the look of enormous floral bouquets.



The nominal stems are welded steel frameworks sunk on an angle into fresh concrete. One blossoming boat-cluster rises up and tilts toward the shade of the vaulted ceiling. The other climbs up and out toward the slanted skylight that runs the length of the room, like a vine yearning for sun.

Both compositions seem ad hoc and improvised. A boat is added here, a kayak wedged in there. Can it all really hold together? Tensile strain is palpable.

When you're dealing with full-scale boats, rather than clipped photographs or even the crumpled car parts that John Chamberlain has famously used to erect sculptures, the energetic sense of possibility escalates. The sculptures don't look "finished" so much as they imply the possibility of infinite expansion -- another boat here, maybe, or another kayak there. Rubins could keep going, adding choices upon choices until the material, the space or time ran out.

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Proliferation is an inescapable subtext, and the use of boats to invoke it is inspired. (Space, like water, is a fluid.) Although the assemblage technique Rubins employs is industrial, the sense of infinite and improvisational expansion is appropriate to a digital frame of mind. Think Internet links.

Her earlier boat-assemblages were multicolored, but the monochrome aluminum here enhances the structural emphasis. (As a friend also joked, in these economically straightened times, color is too expensive anyway.) The silvery monochrome also meshes nicely with the selection of six big, abstract, heavily worked graphite drawings push-pinned

to walls elsewhere in the gallery; large photo-collages of multicolored boats are upstairs.

--Christopher Knight

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Gagosian Gallery, 456 N. Camden Dr., Beverly Hills, (310) 271-9400, through July 9 (drawings) and Sept. 3 (sculptures). Closed Sun. and Mon.

Photos: Nancy Rubins, "Work for New Space, Stainless Steel, Monochrome I," 2010; "Collage," 2008; Credit: Erich Koyama

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