

Lisa Kramer Vintage



ART, ART AND DESIGN

FRANCESCA PASTINE: TOTEM

JANUARY 12, 2015 | LISA | [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

My friend [Francesca Pastine](#) is a talented artist whose creativity never fails to amaze me. Whether she is working in a conventional medium like oil paint, or less conventional media, she manages to produce work that is both beautiful and meaningful. For several years she has been working on a series called the *Artforum Excavations*. In these works she cuts and folds Artforum magazines and transforms them into art objects.

Her earliest works in this series remind me of topographic maps, with hills and valleys carved from the pages of the magazine.



Artforum36



Artforum 45

The excavations are always subtractive and, even when it appears that the magazine has jumped the confines of its form to drip and ooze, nothing has been added to each magazine but Francesca's vision. The works are complex, sometimes utilizing multiple copies of the same issue to explore themes and variations.



Artforum 43, Ghost



Artforum 35



Artforum 44

In Francesca's current show *Totem* at the Eleanor Harwood Gallery in San Francisco, the Artforum Excavations have gotten figural, taking of the form of masks.

As stated on the gallery website, "Pastine has intricately cut and folded pages from ARTFORUM magazines to create masks and totems. She did not actively seek to make the masks with any particular

cultural reference in mind. Instead, she relies on her imagination and subconscious images of “masks” held in her mind’s eye. Through re-contextualizing and subverting the ARTFORUM magazine to her own ends, she conflates socio-economic and political conditions with her lived experience. In this way, she sees the masks as “power objects” that function in a similar way to ritual masks and totems. The original function of ARTFORUM as an authority of cultural production is thwarted and, instead, it becomes an object d’art that reads as a relic rather than a commentator.”

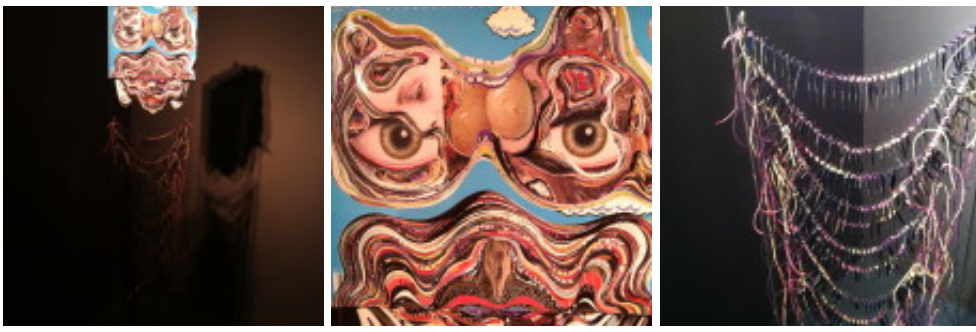


*Artforum 47, Unsolicited Collaboration with
Cindy Sherman*

Some of the masks have leapt off the gallery to become freestanding sculpture. (Click on each photo below to enlarge)



At the entrance to the gallery a warning is posted: “Parents and Guardians must be responsible for children. Objects in this exhibit are sharp and dangerous. Strictly no touching allowed” When I saw this warning I thought it was tongue in cheek. It wasn’t until I reached these sculptures in the back room that I realized it was serious: the delicate feather-like necklaces and breast plates hanging from the masks are the spent Exacto blades used in their creation. Even the detritus used in making art becomes art in Francesca’s hands.



Totem runs from January 10, 2015 to February 21, 2015 at the Eleanor Harwood Gallery, 1295 Alabama Street, San Francisco.

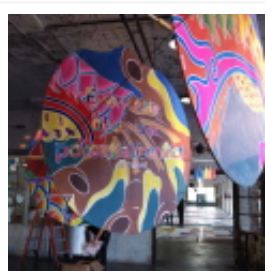
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