

(2015) and other sculptures opens the works up to additional interpretations, as strange, yet vaguely recognizable forms provoke the imagination. Each meticulously constructed piece is a celebration and intimation of the complexity of existence. And with every carapace of the human form, appearing in numerous positions and contortions, one is reminded of the fragility and impermanence of human life.

Tactility is of utmost importance in Hachisuko's sculptures. Prominently displayed zippers, button-down sweaters, askew collars, and precariously tilted hoods conjure people of all ages and characteristics. These subtle protrusions add an important dimension to the sculptures by introducing elements of mystery and impenetrability to otherwise ordinary clothes; they recall the immediacy and presence of former owners, as well as their painful absence.

Unlike the exuberant color palette of Hachisuko's previous work, these new soft sculptures present relatively subdued, though occasionally still brightly patterned hues that lean toward a preponderance of black, blue, and brown. Painstakingly erected on circular pedestals swathed in upholstery fabric, Hachisuko's sculptures balance grace, beauty, and harmony with accident and imperfection. Akin in some ways to Shinique Smith's bound sculptures made of discarded belongings (referred to as "cubes of consciousness" by one writer), Hachisuko's accumulations are formally composed and constructed at different heights so that viewers can confront them head on. At once whimsical and serious, these sculptures have a depth of meaning that becomes palpable the longer one engages with them.

—Bansie Vasvani

NEW YORK

Martha Walker

The Sylvia Wald and Po Kim Art Gallery

Martha Walker is a microbiology-minded Surrealist whose recent show, "Broken World, Anxious Heart," imagined a toxic garden. Long ago, it seems, life rose from luxuriant waters, briefly inhaled the air's sweetness, then froze. Denizens of this now-petrified forest of twisted steel skeletons include feminine breeds undulating their potent animas and biomorphic forms caught between *joie de vivre* and a *danse macabre*. Formally elegant species defy weighty steel, and negative arabesques assert themselves within masses of dense metal. It's all best described as lyrical gravitas.

Walker's deft handling of molten steel produces these inverted narratives. *Mixed Emotions* (2015), for example, consists of a pair of outstretched, tentacled arms rising like starfish limbs performing a water ballet. But this animated form gives pause, for it appears more like an amputated remnant of a larger being, now gone but recalled by the ghost-like shadow cast on the wall. Walker confers incredible buoyancy on these physically heavy sculptures through a difficult and slow "puddled" process. It involves dripping molten metal, one drip at a time (like wax from a candle) onto an armature, then using a torch to manipulate the material as it solidifies. The resulting bead-like forms percolate through the surface, glistening like precious black pearls. In *Pearl* (2008), a smooth, womb-like shape, puddled and dark within, bursts into an openwork motif of petals. A woefully unstable oval poised on the floral center threatens to slide off like the slippery yolk of an undercooked egg. *Ebola* (2015) extends the uncertainty metaphor: Is the writhing figure being consumed by a mindless scourge, or is some brutal force spawning a terrifying new organism?

This tenacious play of anthropomorphic oppositions informs Walker's best work, including *Reign of Tears* (2010). Rising like an enormous dripped candle, this skinny rod of bubbly blobs recalls Alberto Giacometti's mottled emaciated figures. By contrast, *Heart Of The Matter* (2014), all abstract energy, finds Walker scribbling in space, spinning art from a line just as nature unfurls

personal rationales explaining many of the works, like the presence of the two representational pieces, were often unclear. Their metaphors, like the vague reference of the show's title, became precious and disrupted the contextual flow of an otherwise compelling abstract narrative. Walker at her best affirms that "less is more."

—Joyce Beckenstein



Martha Walker, *Heart Of The Matter*, 2014. Welded steel, 1.08 x 1.08 x 1.08 ft.

a flower from seed. Here, an elegant open circle of swirls radiates from a compact center, like the filaments of a passionflower emanating from its central stigma.

"Broken World, Anxious Heart" also featured two figurative works. *The Light Within* (2015), a full-length figure of a woman in a dappled burqa, her yellow eyes ablaze, references the psyche of Muslim women. *Vigilance* (2013), according to the wall text, evolved during Walker's personal battle with cancer. Neither work fit formally or contextually within this otherwise well-orchestrated exhibition of semi-abstract forms. Herein lay the weakness of the show: the political and

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

Myron Helfgott

Anderson Gallery, Virginia

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Myron Helfgott is as skeptical of language as he is fascinated by its tendency toward misrepresentation and digression, effects that can be problematic but also poetic, ironic, or humorous. A recent retrospective covering 45 years of studio practice revealed his interest in the machinations of conversation, the various emotional, psychological, and intellectual manifestations of its give and take. The work contains the everyday musings of friends and lovers, inward negotiations, pronouncements of