

Lost & Found

By Hovey Brock



Kayode Ojo, *Ice Queen*, 2020. Zara Sequin Knit Dresses, Voarge Set of 20 Keyrings with Stainless Steel Key Rings, Carabiner Hooks with Key Fob 25 mm (Silver), Ikea Tobias Chairs, Clear Amac Boxes, Glacier Bay Beveled Edge Bath Mirrors, Victorinox Swiss Army Knives silvertch, 48 x 72 x 30 inches. Courtesy Martos Gallery.

The title *Lost & Found* brings to mind a miscellany brought together by chance, and at first it is hard to find a thread that connects the works in this show. The differences between the artists' practices make for a study in contrasts: Kayode Ojo's elegant readymades referencing fashion and consumer culture versus Arthur Simms's ramshackle assemblages of twine, wire, tinfoil, discarded bottles, and other trash; Alexandria Smith's dark, erotically charged images versus Arnold Kemp's abstract canvases and works on paper. A total non sequitur to the rest, Jessica Diamond's wall piece, *Is That All There Is?* (1984/2010), eschews object status altogether. It is a wall painting of a world map, with the ironic title hand lettered above. The map has no political markings or natural details, apart from the outlines of the land masses. Looking at it, the viewer has no place to home in on, a feeling that—at first blush—could apply to the entire show. But, that feeling of being at loose ends has its uses. *Lost & Found* is an invitation to stop, take a breath, and engage with these artworks sans an agenda, perhaps to discover the unexpected.

MARTOS GALLERY



Installation view: *Lost & Found*, Martos Gallery, New York, 2021. Courtesy Martos Gallery.

Ojo's and Simms's works, superficially so different, engage in a deep conversation on class, particularly in their choice of found objects and materials. *Ice Queen* (2020) gives a laundry list of materials loaded with well-known brand names: Zara, Victorinox, Ikea. Everything is white, metallic, or clear—chilly indeed. The Victorinox Swiss Army Knife, blades out, hangs like a pendant on a chain linking two armchairs that, covered with sequin dresses, look like two fierce divas air kissing. *Overdressed (Blush)* (2018), looks like a hilarious fashion scarecrow in a blond wig, waving one arm, and dressed in a pale pink faux fur coat. In addition to the wig and dress, there are gold and crystal necklaces. As noted above, Simms's materials are the opposite of glamorous. A towering, totemic construction, *Ego Sum, Portrait of Arthur Simms as a Junk Collector* (1994), lists humble, workmanlike materials such as rope, glue, and wire, as well as art materials such as charcoal, markers, pen, and pencil. Rope, wood, glue, and screws come together in *Portrait of an Angry Man with a Gun* (1992), which resembles both a sailboat and a recumbent human figure. Whereas Ojo animates his work by placing the right objects in just the right way, the power of Simms's pieces comes out of his obsessive winding of rope, or in the case of *Stupa* (2008), wire, around and around their armatures. As extensions of his will, his works are invested with a life force.

MARTOS GALLERY



Arnold J. Kemp, *NUT-FREE I*, 2021. Acrylic and graphite on canvas, 69 x 69 inches. Courtesy Martos Gallery.

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