

Los Angeles Times

Review It's a jungle inside this room at Hannah Hoffman Gallery



Margaret Lee and Emily Sundblad's installation "You Can Teach an Old Zebra New Tricks" at Hannah Hoffman Gallery. (Michael Underwood)

By **SHARON MIZOTA**

August 28, 2015, 4:00 pm

In their latest collaboration, New York artists Margaret Lee and Emily Sundblad evoke a Curious George story in which the mischievous monkey transforms a room and its furniture (without permission, of course) into a jungle scene.

The spare installation at Hannah Hoffman is equally breezy and charming, invoking the joys of world building often at the heart of artistic endeavors.

Consisting of six painted roll-down window blinds and four chairs, whimsically decorated to look like animals, the exhibition gives us a schematic, fragmented view into George's creation.

Each blind is painted to look like a window, through which we glimpse part of a zebra, a leopard or a palm frond. Painted in bright colors with a loose, confident hand, the imagery is both mysterious and unmistakable.

The chairs in the center of the room have bodies painted like zebras, but are furred in dried grass skirts that look like lion's manes. They refer to George's transformation of furniture into animal companions, but possess a prickly life of their own as weird, intriguing objects.

In the end, the exhibition highlights George's desire to recreate his birthplace within the walls of the city.

While there is an unavoidable colonial taint to the story, with its absolute contrast between wild jungle and civilized city, the exhibition celebrates a longing for home and the irrepressible impulse to make it anew.

Hannah Hoffman Gallery, 1010 N. Highland Ave., (323) 450-9106, through Sept. 12. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.hannahhoffmangallery.com

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