



DECOMPOSITION



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Curated by Constance Mallinson

Coleen Sterritt

Nikko Mueller

Marie Thibeault

Jonathon Hornedo

Yvette Gellis

Nancy Evans

Doug Harvey

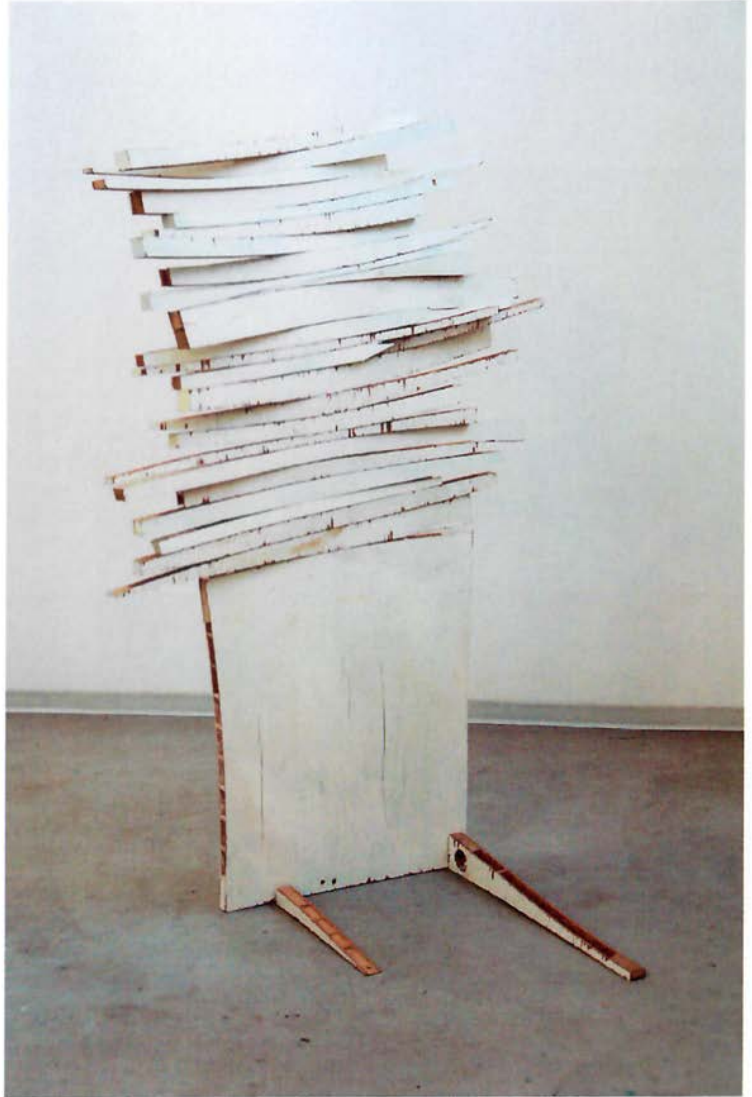
Constance Mallinson

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Suite 208
Los Angeles, California 90012
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Fellows
of Contemporary
Art

Coleen Sterritt

Sterritt uses these words to describe her work: ruined, rotting, rubbish, refuse, recycle, rehabilitate, reconsider, reset, reinvent, reconstitute, regenerate, redesign, reestablish, rediscover. Such language is only the beginning, for Sterritt's poetic sculptures always manage to resist and reject easy associations opting instead for investigations into uneasy balances, disruptions and states of emergence. Her sculptures have typically combined commonplace, natural, and industrial materials with the handcrafted to address tensions between the personal and the manufactured. Studio waste, felt, paper, cardboard, carpet scraps, plastic and plywood discards, cannibalized bits of furniture or trees, consumer detritus, or dismantled sculptures have been used in both large scale installations and the smaller wall mounted pieces like *Violin de Kiki* made of an old chair back full of tangled wires. Her three dimensional collages are indebted to such Modernist efforts as Kurt Schwitters' cubistic accumulations of discarded objects interspersed with hand crafted forms that in their conflation of old and new, re-imagined the modern city. As importantly, having come of age in an era when post-minimalist sculptors like Eva Hesse and Nancy Graves broke the hold of Minimalism and Reductivism and instead emphasized process, organic and biomorphic forms and body allusions that had all been previously repressed, Sterritt has maintained an abiding interest in diverse eccentric materials, sly humor, and formal inventiveness. Vestiges of the utilitarian such as household cast-offs crossbreed with accretions of natural materials and repurposed construction or building supplies derived from nature. The resulting plant / animal hybrids, human / machine confabulations, and artificial landscapes, reveal she is less interested in mimesis of nature and more intrigued by exploring our relationship to the natural world in a technological, consumerist age. In her hands, layering and piling torn cork flooring so it rises up from a plateau-like platform to form a tipsy tower reminiscent of an eroded Monument Valley mountain creates metaphors linking the products and practices of our age to the same forces that have shaped geological formations. *Over and Over* similarly makes use of a twisting vertical stack growing upward from what appears to be an overturned table missing two legs. Cut from hollow painted plywood walls likely rescued from a demolition site, the shards and flaking white slivers of wood are not refuse resigned to the landfill. Rather, Sterritt evokes a teetering high rise, heaps of rock and sediment, a wobbly cartoon creature, water-warped signage, or a scrappy side of shack. For her, destruction and decomposition are catalysts for new realizations, the forms of which are tinged with multiple memories.



Over and Over, 66" x 44" x 39", wood, Fixall, and adhesive, 2012



Violin de Kiki, 18" x 10" x 3", mixed media, 2011



Honey Pile, 42" x 54" x 50", mixed media, 2011