

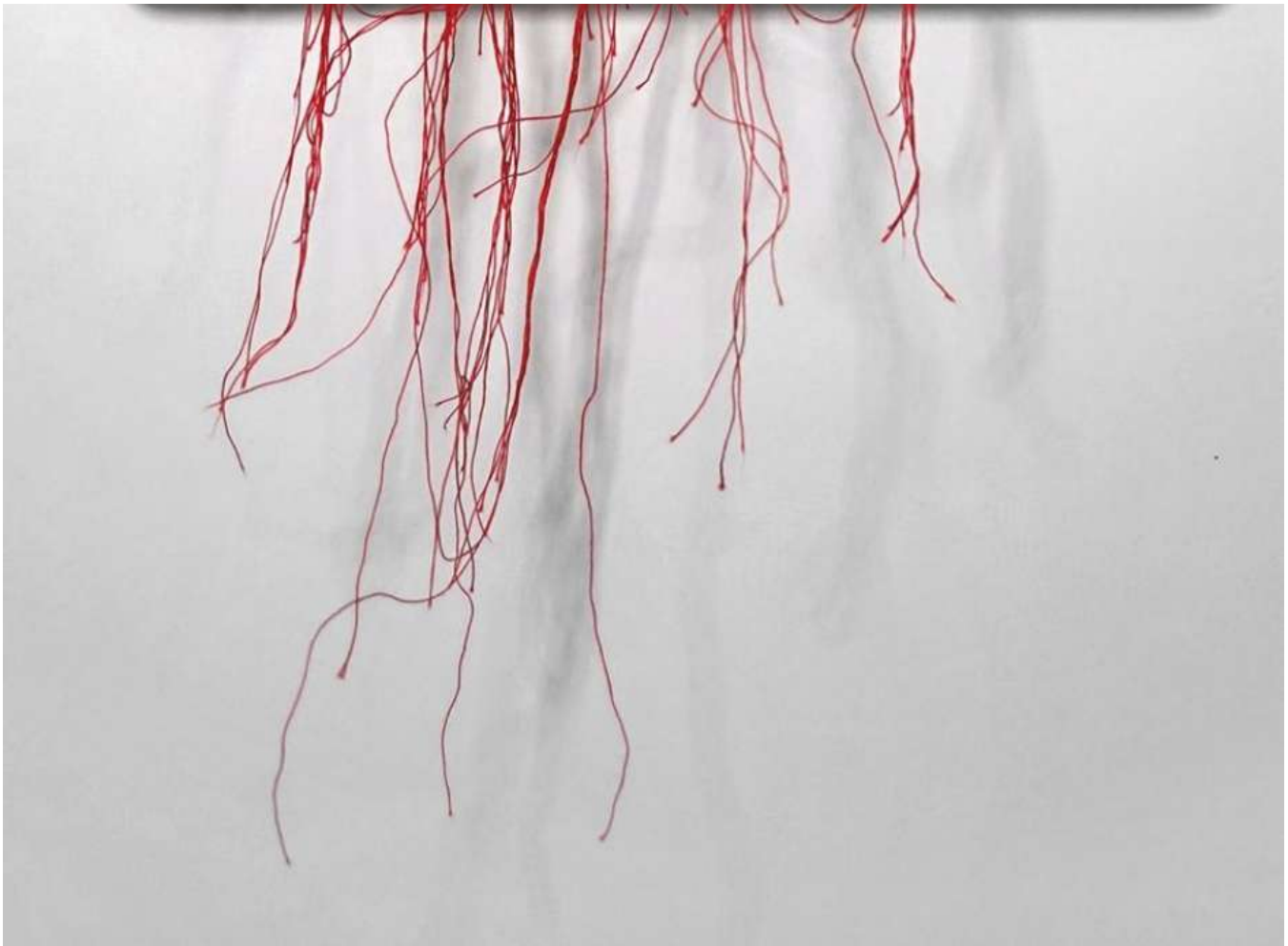
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT // ARTS & THEATER

Art review: "Dendro Beton #11" a walk in an abstract forest

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April 23, 2019





"Dendro Beton #11" is among works in Orna Feinstein's show "The Other Side of the Forest," on view through April 27 at Anya Tish Gallery.

Photo: Courtesy of the artist / Anya Tish Gallery

The piece: "Dendro Beton #11"

The artist: Orna Feinstein

Where: In "The Other Side of the Forest," Anya Tish Gallery, 4411 Montrose, through Saturday

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Orna Feinstein has made art about trees for more than a decade without depicting leaves or branches. While she sometimes creates paper installations from rolled up, recycled printed materials that resemble floral kaleidoscopes, much of her work of recent years has an abstract, minimalistic, geometric sensibility. Her prints on layers of plexiglass even verge on cool and near-colorless.

This is because Feinstein also sees trees from the perspective of a scientist. Her work has long been rooted in examining both the organic and the geometric in nature, as it might be seen under a microscope; as well as exploring the properties of her chosen materials.

"Dendro Beton #11" is from a recent series of works that actually are pretty readable as slices of tree trunks, if you know that to start. Within a concrete base, she has spun spun tightly-wound slivers of paper to create 'growth rings,' and affixed thread that dangles like roots.

Not that roots would actually be dangling from the center of a tree trunk. This is still abstract art. The word 'dendro' refers to trees, while 'beton,' which has Latin origins, refers to concrete. And it makes sense that the show's title is "The Other Side of the Forest." This is a side most people don't see.

In a video, Feinstein explains that she experimented a dozen years ago with the basic imagery of the "Dendro Beton" pieces, but she was using plaster and fabric at that time, and the results didn't please her. Likewise, her recent "Dendros" acrylic paintings — which thrum with colorful, organic energy — developed a while ago as drawings before making their way to large canvases.

"The work that is more geometric is coming from the mind; I'm thinking like a scientist," she says. "The organic is coming from the heart, more about feeling than thinking.... It all comes from me studying chemistry when I was young. I have the mind of a scientist and the heart of an artist," she says in the video. "Everything is about timing. Ideas are brewing, but it takes some combination of material, location, ideas and state of mind that brings you back to experiment with something from the past, with new material and better results."

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