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Alchemic assemblages of poetry, trauma, and survival

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Hannelore Baron, "Untitled," 1981

Twenty-five beautiful and sentimental works compose "Collage & Assemblage," an exhibit of **Hannelore Baron** (1926 – 1987) at the esteemed **Jack Rutberg Fine Arts** in Los Angeles. The artist's assemblages, also held in renowned museums such as MOMA, the Guggenheim, LACMA and the National Gallery of Art in D.C., are packed with emotion and history. Baron interweaves abstract mixed media objects and printmaking techniques, as if delivering a message about the universal non-separation between life experience, art and the human spirit.

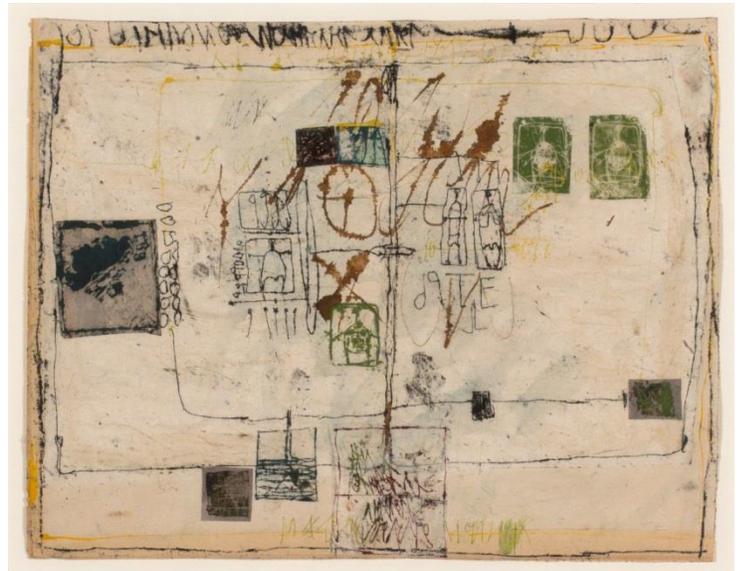
Born Jewish in Germany, Baron experienced a frightful childhood during Hitler's reign. Hannelore and her brother were sent to a special school for Jews only. The family's apartment was ransacked and her father beaten. This sparked a period of flight and border crossing, with the family first entering Luxembourg, making their way to Lisbon before emigrating to New York in 1941. After studying textiles and delving into Chinese philosophy, Buddhism and Taoism, Baron took up painting, eventually working in collage and then years later, after the birth of her children, landing on her signature style, that of wood assemblages.

Her former traumatic experiences are revealed in the collage and assemblage boxes in numerous ways. From splats of paint that may appear as blood, to secret symbolic letters or numbers that seem to have meaning but mainly signify hidden messages. Each piece has a provocative yet beautiful aura, that emanates from the art of mixed media. She uses color and black and white drawings, paint, printed etchings, cloth that is torn, strings of various widths and boxes, all of which seem to tell a story.

In "Untitled," (1981), the mixed media assemblage box is made with different width and size string, inside and out of the enclosed box. There is string in the shape of what appears to be reading glasses and other pieces that appear taut as cable, along with painted paper and other mixed media inside. All are hidden in the box nicely enclosed by a string as if magically transposing the ingredients into a journey presented as a somewhat ominous art gift.

“I think of Hannelore’s works as talismans,” says gallerist Jack Rutberg. “The alchemy of her collages and assemblages has certain perfection without being mannered. It’s hard to think of a hand having intruded in their making. The simultaneous poetry and gravitas in this work seems to have been conjured into being, rather than crafted. There’s a raw power that is so beautifully tempered by a delicate and fragile poignancy.”

In "Untitled," (1982), the collage presents imprints of something that has happened and something that is about to happen. Some of these imprints are literal marks that have a provocative intensity, while others may be a symbolic shape, such as that of a person watching. Animal figures, trees and impressions of people may represent life, while her presentation pulls one into her sense of exposing time, and suggesting the spirit of art as the universal clock.



Hannelore Baron, "Untitled," 1982

Says Rutberg, “There’s a fragility to the materials that attracted Hannelore; fabrics string, discarded scraps of wood, exotic paper; all materials that seemed to be as delicate as the artist’s own psyche; all reused materials, saved from ‘extinction’ and repurposed in the service of creating something poignant.”

"Hannelore Baron: Collage & Assemblage" can be viewed until Januray 30, 2016 at Jack Rutberg Fine Arts.