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Leonardo Drew, Will Yackulic: sculpture, paintings

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Little contemporary art that contains no text invites translation into words. But an emphatically felt resistance to analysis marks the work of New York sculptor Leonardo Drew.

As his memorable exhibition at Anthony Meier's affirms, Drew prizes visual impact and presence above other aspects of construction, yet his work never comes across as superficial or self-important.

The largest piece here, "Number 13S" (2011), an 8-foot-square assemblage of blackened wood slats, pegs and branches, looks sidelong as inviting as a bed of nails transferred to the wall. Frontally it suggests a scorched model city, a suggestion held in check by broken tree limbs looming from the upper left corner.

Knowing that Drew is African American may tempt viewers to give undue weight to his preference for working in black and white. But that information merely adds depth to the already persuasive sense that he has made assemblage his own as an idiom of response to modern history and art history.

The dangerously bristling wall piece "Number 11S" (2011) suggests futuristic wreckage. It seems to link visions as disparate as Hollywood interstellar space vehicles and Théodore Géricault's throttling shipwreck picture "The Raft of the Medusa" (1819).

A triptych on white paper, cutting across separate frames, stages the classic abstract expressionist brushstroke - of which Roy Lichtenstein made satirical hay - as a black comet, trailing detritus as it arcs toward nowhere.

Leonardo Drew: Sculpture and collage. Through May 13. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tues.-Fri. Anthony Meier Fine Arts, 1969 California St., San Francisco. (415) 351-1400, www.anthonymeierfinearts.com.

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"Number 13S" (2011) wood sculpture by Leonardo Drew.