

ARTFORUM

Kelly Nipper

HAMMER MUSEUM

10899 Wilshire Boulevard

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In a carnivalesque hollow of mysterious props, just keep to your right after the stack of oversize weaving shuttles; we're not in Germany anymore. Instead, the legendary wood known as the "Black Forest" is diffused across Kelly Nipper's installation as a concept useful for its ability to generate myth wherever it touches.

Along with influences such as the movement notation systems developed by the Hungarian choreographer Rudolf Laban, Nipper's latest work declares an evident interest in craft and vernacular art, best displayed in both *Red and White*, *Soft White*, *Off White*, *Pure White*, *Textured Snow*, *Black No Definition*, *Dark Materials*, *Near Black*, *Average Dark Foliage*, *Landscape Shadows*, *Acute Side Lighting* and *Figure Underlay*, *Felt Overlay U, X, Y (With Poison Berry Pattern)* (all works cited 2013). In the former, sandbags, sewn in black, white, brick reds, rusty browns, and earth greens, are each appliquéd with a single bold vinyl letter and apposed on the floor in a semicircle around the room, echoing the gallery's dome-shaped ceiling. Appearing to spell out words, the letters quickly trail off the cliff of language and squash down into abstraction. In the latter, cardboard figures wrapped in white plaster bandages are, true to their title, overlaid with stiff carmine-red feltdresses and end with an eerie absence of extremities. Splayed across a long white table, their collapsed poses suggest dancers in the past tense, cursed by some dark magic into immobility, awaiting a knight to break their resting spell.

Fortunately then, eleven "movement performances" featuring dancer Marissa Ruazol are forthcoming. Knowing so turns the initial impression of an abandoned stage set into a constellation of objects awaiting their cues to look lively; plaster mannequins are all dressed up with no way to move until the performance arrives, not to bring them to life *Fantasia*-style, but to activate them as sites of potential and extend the installation as an image through time.



View of "Black Forest," 2014.

— Paige K. Bradley