

ARTFORUM

The Story of O(OO) David Lewis

by Tobi Haslett
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Lucy Dodd, *Mantis*, 2015, found lamp on Garth Hudson chair frame, broken eye glass and ceramic hands, 22 x 35 x 23".

Strapped, whipped, and yanked along, this show is a bridled beast, and like its namesake—Anne Desclos’s 1954 S-M novel *The Story of O*—it gasps with exquisite agony. Jared Maderé’s untitled installation is a battered monument to binding and constraint: Branches are stuffed into a hippie dress and topped with a wig, making a psychotic mannequin, a wretched anthropomorphism of fabric and bark. Behind it (her?), Maderé has strung up what looks like sagging sails, streaked with blue and patched with cracked mirrors, a picture both glittering and strangely soft—but the whole thing is bolted to the floor with metal cables, and voilà: We’re slapped back into Desclos’s chamber of bruises and leashes.

Pretty homologies spring up all around. Lynn Randolph’s *Transfusions*, 1995, also writhes within the tangles of bondage and sexualized submission. The painting is wittily crass, as it depicts a white woman—perfect measurements, chest thrust up in a cartoon of ecstasy and possession—preyed upon by bats, an IV drip, and a fanged, claw-shaking *Nosferatu*. Lucy Dodd’s metal sculpture *Mantis*, 2015, glances at it from across the room, its power cord snaking on the floor like a dropped whip.

But the floor itself is what locks the pieces in a final grid of domination and surrender. It’s stamped with a diagram from philosopher Graham Harman’s book *The Quadruple Object*, 2011, a key text in the field of object-oriented ontology (OOO)—the exhibition’s other namesake. Harman has made a career of leveling human consciousness, pounding subjects into objects: but the branches, cables, cords, and wires dribbling over his rigid chart whisper a different story, that of a consciousness both throttled and free, laughing through the beating.