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Blue McRight: "Drink Me" at Samuel Freeman Gallery  
by Jody Zellen



*Reservoir*, 2014, Vintage bookcase, faucets, canteens and sand, 30" x 55" x 20"

Water, or the lack of it, figures prominently in Blue McRight's installation "Drink Me." Perhaps an acknowledgement of California's current drought, but more likely used metaphorically, as in: drink in my aura and my original use of materials. The works in this exhibition—mixed-media sculptures and graphite-on-oil panels—are more than the sum of their uncanny parts. McRight is a contemporary Surrealist. She infuses new life into discarded objects, often bought on EBay, creating sensual and seductive sculptures. The centerpiece of the exhibition is *Siren* (2014), a large tree-shaped form covered with blue bandages and wrapped tightly with thread suspended horizontally in the gallery space. Jutting out at the end of each branch-like an appendage is a brass nozzle or hose unable to fulfill its function. As viewers encircle the sculpture the nuances of its title (named after the dangerous yet beautiful temptresses in Greek mythology), its form and construction become more apparent. The different sized and shaped nozzles suggest an eel-like creature, a collection of devices that could signal a warning heard from all directions something beautiful and dangerous simultaneously.

The intersection between natural and man-made worlds continues to be a subject that McRight explores in her evocative works. The sculptures often allude to what could be, but are rendered an impossibility. Twenty-one empty vintage Boy Scout canteens, ironically titled *Rainbow* (2014), hang in a row by their weathered straps, in close proximity to *Siren*. Their faded beige tones share little with the vibrancy of a rainbow. Similarly, in *Reservoir* (2014), 28 canteens are stored in a vintage bookcase topped with two inoperable faucets, frustrating functionality. McRight works both large and small and imbues each piece with meaning and integrity. The

small sculptures do not feel like studies for the larger forms but rather succinct and often quite humorous expressions of a specific idea. For example, in the nine-inch- long *Other #10 (I Will If You Will)* (2013) two different-sized nozzles are posed, ready to spurt from the opposite ends of a wrapped piece of hose. *Other #8 (Night Crawler)*, (2013), another piece of wrapped hose bookended by a small nozzle and a weathered red triangular spout, could be interpreted as an inchworm or some nocturnal creature crawling along a shelf. Each of McRight's creations, be it a work on paper or panel or a sculpted object, are enticing narratives that draw from Surrealism, myth and the observable world, becoming magical entities with myriad interpretations.