



**Fawn Rogers
Violent Garden
The Lodge**

September 9 – October 7, 2017

The two rooms that comprise **Fawn Roger's** installation *Violent Garden* are complementary and contradictory simultaneously. In many ways they are a perfect dichotomy— one calm and beautiful, the other aggressive and unsightly. The installation features more than 35 individual objects that work in concert with each other, like people, each asserting their individuality. At base level, *Violent Garden* is an installation of rectangular sculptures made from plywood as well as urban ash, nails, soil, mirrors and photographs of light broken into its component colors. Some of the sculptures combine many of these elements, while others merely a few. Ranging from 8 to 72 inches high, the vertical box-like structures are placed on the gallery floor in an array that recalls graveyards as well as installations of minimalist sculpture. The smaller works fill one room, the larger works the other.

Rogers refers to these objects as spirit caskets— containers for fleeting spirits not physical bodies. She states, *"Mind and body equals spirit, and when they're arranged in a room together, the interiors and exteriors start to reflect back and forth. The interiors become exteriors and exteriors become interiors."*

Upon entry viewers confront plywood objects (similar in shape and size to cinder blocks, but not nearly as uniform), dotting the gallery floor. Many are painted white and have had nails pounded through their surfaces creating a textured field of sharp points that cover their interior and/or exterior. In some ways these works recall **Eva Hesse's** *Accession* sculptures, but while Hesse filled her metal boxes with soft, seductive rubber tubing, Rogers uses sharp nails that create a repellent, uninviting interior space. Rogers' spirit caskets simultaneously reference construction and destruction, life and death. Despite the violence associated with their making, the works are

quite beautiful as some of the surfaces shimmer with nail heads of different sizes and colors, becoming an abstract composition of dots. Even those covered with caked mud invite close scrutiny, as when the mud dries the cracks form intricate patterns. Because the boxes are at ground level, viewers might not be aware of their reflections when they pass by those with mirrored surfaces.

This changes in the second room, which is filled with taller spirit caskets and many with mirrored interiors and exteriors, making it almost impossible not to see one's reflection from any vantage point. In some ways, this room becomes a hall of mirrors. The surfaces of these larger spirit caskets range from the organic (mud) to the mechanical (electromagnetic photograph) and reflective (mirror) in various combinations. As viewers pass through the columns, it is hard not to associate them with a field of totems each with its own history and individuality. Rogers references both nature and the urban environment in these works that are human-scaled, yet not bodies. She states, "*I want to explore conflict and construction, autonomy and evolution.*"

By dubbing the installation *Violent Garden*, Rogers engages in a dialectic: Gardens are not associated with violence, however nature has a violent streak. Through the presentation of minimalist sculptures that in reality are not minimal at all but complex amalgamations of surfaces, textures and ideas, Rogers confronts personal and universal themes in a unique and expansive way.

<http://artnowla.com/2017/09/17/violent-garden/>