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Fran Siegel, *Lineage Through Landscape: Tracing Egun in Brazil*

The Fowler Museum at UCLA

July 23 – December 10, 2017

By Jody Zellen



There are two points of entry into Fran Siegel's exquisite exhibition, "*Lineage Through Landscape: Tracing Egun in Brazil*." One is purely visual: admiring the unique way the individual drawings and collages are sewn together and suspended from the ceiling; noticing the nuances of texture, color and pattern across Siegel's woven gridded lattice. The other comes from the knowledge that Siegel was inspired by objects from the Fowler's collection, specifically an ensemble worn during the worship of Egun, and that the work was begun during a Fulbright Fellowship in Brazil.

Siegel wanted to call forth Egun (the spirits of ancestors) in this project, not by illustrating rituals but by thinking deeply about issues relating to heritage and landscape, history and memory and filtering her experiences and research through a process of mark-making, drawing and collage.

The resulting work is a layered array of vellum drawings and printed fabric, as well as cyanotypes, gold leaf and cut paper, interwoven into a carefully constructed visual narrative that unfolds across a thirty-five foot expanse. Each element has its own *raison d'être* and upon close examination the intricacies and details of Siegel's hand work emerge.

The power of the work is its collective presence. Siegel links her compositional strategy to her interest in Cubism and to the reinstallation of broken Portuguese tiles she saw in churches in Salvador and Cachoiera (Brazil) where scenes were incomplete and disjointed—made from disparate fragments that still coalesce as a visual whole.

Although Siegel's intentions were to create a work that embodied Egun while referencing Portugal's role in bringing enslaved Africans to Brazil (many were made to work in gold mines), as well as the patterns of gold found in rock formations, these references are enveloped by the overall visual power of the installation. While the journey required to make *Lineage Through Landscape: Tracing Egun in Brazil* and its myriad associations are integral to its creation, what remains in the mind and eye of the viewer is its beauty and complexity, with or without this contextualization.

Fran Siegel, *Lineage Through Landscape: Tracing Egun in Brazil*, July 23 – December 10, 2017 at Fowler Museum at UCLA, 308 Charles E. Young Drive North, Los Angeles, CA 90024, www.fowler.ucla.edu.

<http://artillerymag.com/fowler-museum-ucla-fran-siegel>