

urbanite



I recently asked Maren Hassinger, a Baltimore artist who is the director of the Rinehart School of Sculpture at the Maryland Institute College of Art, what work is currently absorbing her. She told me she is developing pieces for an October exhibition in New York. She calls them "sit-upons"—objects of various sizes and shapes, crafted of twisted and woven newspaper, meant to be sat upon in the gallery. She first made pieces like this as a Camp Fire Girl in Los Angeles in the 1950s. The detail of the work shown here (which is not meant to be sat upon) is from a similarly fabricated work shown in 2008, titled *Wrenching News*. In an e-mail, she stated that the work harkens back to early human origins on the African savanna and the universal need for "a place of safety where the approach of friends or enemies could be clearly seen." The message, she wrote, is that "lives are like a field in the wind. Many stories, one field." Looking at this object, we are reminded of a shared human memory and that our own identity is tied to that of those who came before us. To see her work in context, I recommend visiting her website. —Alex Castro