

ARTFORUM



Maren Hassinger, *The Veil Between Us*, 2007/2018, newspaper, dimensions variable.

LOS ANGELES

Maren Hassinger

ART + PRACTICE

3401 W. 43rd Pl

February 24 - May 26

Pink plastic bags, each puffed with breath and holding a small love note, cover every inch of a narrow hallway, resembling the internal linings of a body. This is *Love*, 2008/2018, an itinerant installation by Maren Hassinger, whose practice imbues everyday materials (wire, newspaper, bags) with the poetics of potentiality. The artist's

manipulations of both materials and space—as seen in her sculptures, installations, and choreographed works for live audiences (*High Noon*, 1976) or for a camera (*Wind*, 2013)—have been woefully understudied, and this exhibition marks an opportunity to find a common spirit among her efforts in diverse mediums across a decades-long practice.

The entanglement of family, affect, and the larger social forces shaping concepts of race and nation is a principle leitmotif. The video *Birthright*, 2005, for example, begins with Hassinger recounting the knowledge she gained during a visit with her paternal uncle. She twists long strips of newspaper as she talks. What might be misinterpreted as a kind of nervousness transmitted through handy busywork is actually a key component of her sculptural language, for the twisted and knotted papers show up elsewhere in the exhibition, specifically as the primary material of *The Veil Between Us*, 2007/2018—a long wall-mounted waterfall of printed matter. As the video progresses, the artist presses her uncle for further details of her family's history, and she mostly succeeds in recovering a branch of her ancestral lineage—where black, white, and indigenous people mixed, sometimes incestuously. The video ends with Hassinger turning off four red standing lamps, as if honoring, and performatively extinguishing, those who came before. Her investigations embrace, rather than illuminate, the uncertainties of the past, knowledge, and the bodies that carry the memory of both.

— Andy Campbell