

Steadman, Ryan. "Critics' Picks: Marcia Kure," *Artforum*, 28 May 2013.

ARTFORUM

Marcia Kure

SUSAN INGLETT GALLERY

522 West 24 Street

May 5–June 19



Despite the muted and humble appearance of Marcia Kure's work, her interior world is extensive. Perhaps this is due to the African-born artist's migration from Nigeria to Berlin, Maine, Atlanta, and now New Jersey, before the age of forty-three. As a result, cultural mores from a cluster of traditions are amalgamated into Kure's modestly sized sculptures, watercolors, and collages, via the hand of someone who has seen a wide array of human social dynamics.

Kure has a keen awareness of modern artistic forms, as well as an eye for the anthropomorphic and how it pertains to her imagery. These attributes commingle vividly in *The Renate Series: You Know Who and the Chambermaid VI*, 2013, a work on paper that features a refined hair/helmet/shroud detailed in delicate gold,

ocher, and brown slivers. This sleek, faceless object evokes a tribal headdress as easily as it does the blond Pantene ideal of hair. Behind it lurks a smaller shape that suggests a child's candy-striped toy or outfit, while blue, brown, and violet washes swirl turbulently around this dyad. Here Kure melds American beauty standards and her African upbringing into an expansive vision of the complex contemporary female: a fierce and protective child-bearing seductress to be both flaunted and hidden away.

Also on display are Kure's bric-a-brac found objects and ceramics, which effectively work like three-dimensional collages. The largest of these objects, *Unveiled*, 2013, is a bulging form that is covered, cinched, and draped with gray cloth and attached to a carpeted wall mount. Bits of fur and toy parts peek out from the cloth at various intervals, giving the object an appearance that is at once monstrous and comical. *Unveiled* is autobiographical and anthropological—a physical fusion of motherhood and fashion across cultures.

Much like the artist Ellen Gallagher, Kure works with perceptions of race, culture, fashion, and femininity, but Kure's distinctive collage-based approach allows her to abstract her final forms, enabling a more open-ended and subconsciously inflected read. A world's worth of meaning is buried within these artworks, and Kure lets you draw it out slowly and enjoyably.