

## Museums

### Review

# In the galleries: Blurring the boundary between sculpture and space



"Africa" by Mitra Lore. Fabricated Steel. (Zenith Gallery)

By **Mark Jenkins**

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Many of the sculptures in “6@35 — Fabricating Culture” incorporate objects or archetypes that are commonplace and easily recognizable. Vienne Rea erects ladders. Gil Ugiansky balances cubes. Wilfredo Valladares has made charred rolling pins into a sort of signature. As arrayed by these and three other artists, such elemental components invoke ones that are even more primal, notably fire and air.

The show, on display at the Zenith Gallery-programmed lobby gallery of 1111 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, marks the 35th anniversary of the Washington Sculptors Group. That organization has more than 150 members, many of whom make art that has little in common with the pieces shown here. Yet “6@35” is a fine and suitably diverse introduction to the group, and its mostly large-scale work fills the spacious lobby authoritatively.

Rea's dream-inspired ladders are built of disparate materials, including tinted translucent acrylic and steel pillars that support rope rungs. The largest has the dimensions of a functional ladder, but is made of mirrored acrylic. Ugiansky works mostly in metal, contrasting regular or eccentric shapes and highly polished or rough-textured surfaces. Both artists use simple forms to define the space around them, as well as reflective exteriors to blur the boundaries between the objects and their surroundings. These sculptures call as much attention to what's not there as to what is. Like Ugiansky, Luc Fiedler taunts gravity with top-heavy arrangements, although he fuses fabricated metal with natural substances and found objects. Most strikingly, Fiedler fixes a cone of partly decayed wood into a circle of metal spokes. He calls the result "Wheel," but it can also be seen as a wizened eye.



(Left) "PRIDE" (from the Ladder series) by Vienne Rea. Acrylic ed. 12. (Zenith Gallery)  
(Right) "Stairway" by Luc Fielder. Cast bronze, steel, stone and polished red granite. (Don Dunsmore/Zenith Gallery)

Allen Linder and Mitra Lore make figurative pieces of rather different dispositions. Linder's bulbous, modestly sized figures have an engagingly cartoonish quality, even if they're rendered not with pen and ink, but with bronze and pewter inlaid with marble and ivory. Drawn in space with thin lines of shaped steel, Lore's sculptures include a lion who's formidable if partly see-through. Where Linder's creatures are small but solid, Lore's are simultaneously strong and delicate.

The show's largest piece is Valladares's "Taller," a three-sided enclosure studded with sewing implements and other domestic talismans. Since parts of it are scorched, the assemblage appears to be a place of both creation and destruction. Heat also forged the artist's cast-aluminum heads of Mesoamerican immortals, who wear metal headdresses of corn, berries and other natural bounty. Rather than organic or mathematical, Valladares's archetypes are cultural.

**6@35 — Fabricating Culture Through Jan. 19 at Zenith Gallery Space, 1111 Pennsylvania Ave. NW.**