

ARTFORUM

Deborah Remington and Davina Semo

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View of “Davina Semo and Deborah Remington,” 2019.

The steely, gradient-filled lacunae of Deborah Remington’s *Saratoga*, 1972, and *Sussex*, 1976, evoke busted TV screens and foggy windshields, beyond which noirish vistas might extend. The artist, who died in 2010 at the age of seventy-nine, was the sole woman among the half-dozen painters and poets who cofounded San Francisco’s Six Gallery, the beatnik haunt where Allen Ginsberg first read *Howl* in 1955. Five of her paintings, made between 1964 and 2003, hang alongside recent sculptures and wall works by Davina Semo at Parts & Labor, a new project space devoted to shows pairing works by one mid-career and one historically recognized artist. The intention behind this format is to—in the words of Manhattan dealers Nicelle Beauchene and Franklin Parrasch, who run the gallery—“reframe and recontextualize important dialogues,” elaborating the “impulses and inclinations each pair of artists share.” In practice, such intergenerational couplings are often less successful in “allowing intimate conversations to unfold” than they are in creating ambiance through an exchange of auras, conferring a certain gravitas on recent work and revealing the gleam of contemporaneity within its predecessors.

Here, the premise that brings Remington’s adamantine abstractions together with Semo’s polished and patinated bronze reliefs and bells—presumably a mutual interest in the dynamics of mirroring and opacity—feels a bit thin, and the pairing doesn’t do the younger artist’s work many favors. Semo’s semi-reflective dimpled surfaces and distressed pendant chimes have rustic charm, but they are upstaged by Remington’s darkly metallic nocturnes, lit up by pulses of flaming blue and honky-tonk red. Congenitally cool and utterly transfixing, they conjure the smoke of ruined bohemia (Ginsberg’s “starry dynamo in the machinery of night” doesn’t feel too far away), only to slice through nostalgia with a razor’s edge.