

TUREEN

MAY 25- JUL 6

Natani Notah : Skirmishhh



Through her own pictorial language Natani Notah drafts narrative schema centering marginalized perspectives and builds three dimensional space for those stories to expand. From collage to clay to filmic repetition these are the alphanumeric in Notah's experiential syllabary, one that speaks of life as a balletic act in the face of unrelenting assault. The tension of a steel rod like that of a kite string is both stabilizing and precarious holding the weight of the artist's metaphor—in her image cosmos there are no superfluities. Every line of the story is essential to the beauty of its balance.

Apparent almost immediately in the language of Notah's exhibition, not only its title, is a preoccupation with conflict. The flags of some conquest rise from not only the page and the floor but also surreally from the artist's own physical form; even the most fundamental of artistic creations, the self-portrait (*Staking a Claim and Intellectual Property*), can't mute this language of war heaped upon indigenous bodies throughout modern history. The checkerboard image also appears in multiple collage works, *Hook Line and Sink Her* as well as *Too Much and Not Enough*. Mirrored in the mosaic floor of the gallery, it speaks not just to physical brutality but also that of a bureaucracy seeking to annihilate a people and their way of life piece by piece, acre by acre.

Skullcap contains one of the most charged images in Notah's image catalogue, a lock of hair, atop an unfired clay mound. But the ambiguity of its interpretation is very much intentional—can this otherwise heinous token of war serve also as the artist's own flag in the ground, an act of resistance to the onslaught? Just as present as conflict in these works is a language of self-determination. Each character in her language, each element of aggression is also an escape route into beauty. The Diné concept of *Hózhó*, beauty found in natural balance, is essential to Notah's practice. Her collage elements do not overwhelm the visual plane but rather float with the most tenuous connections in white space, each one's geometry and color clearly legible. The flags perched atop bulbous mounds and stuffed leather limbs atop found furniture are not only signifiers of war but also the artist's visual antidote. The imagery may at times conjure something more sinister but the composition belies an innate reverence for a deeper level of aesthetic harmony.

The title of the exhibition itself plays with the duality of meaning found in the work. The sound of an oncoming cavalry in the video *Rattling Flags*, of a looming fight, also mirrors that of a *Peyote* song; the violence of colonization being ever present in indigenous societies cannot negate the insistent survival of cultural tradition. Skirmish leads to *shh*, an exclamation demanding silence. There has always been a systematic silencing of indigenous voices, but Notah's wordplay could also be read to quiet the centering of whiteness in indigenous stories; could there be a more utopian end to this cycle of violence and silence? The spaces she creates in her work are history laden but are also, more importantly, sites of indigenous-centered placemaking. Images of beauty, protest, leisure and aggression all share the intention of serving as portals through which an indigenous viewer could find respite or escape. Though visually delicate, they hold fast in the throws of battle. Notah's work thrives by embracing all that was and is part of indigenous life, the arc of our universe.







Intellectual Property, 2023, Digital print, 11 x 16 in., 27.94 x 40.64 cm, 14 x 19 (framed), 35.56 x 48.26 cm (framed), NN0001

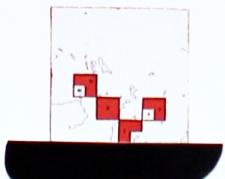
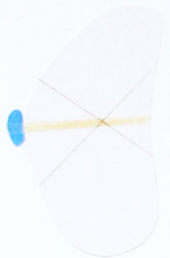


Fistful of Flags, 2024, Terra Cotta clay and white stake flags, 21 x 7 x 7 in., 53.34 x 17.78 x 17.78 cm, NANOT0011



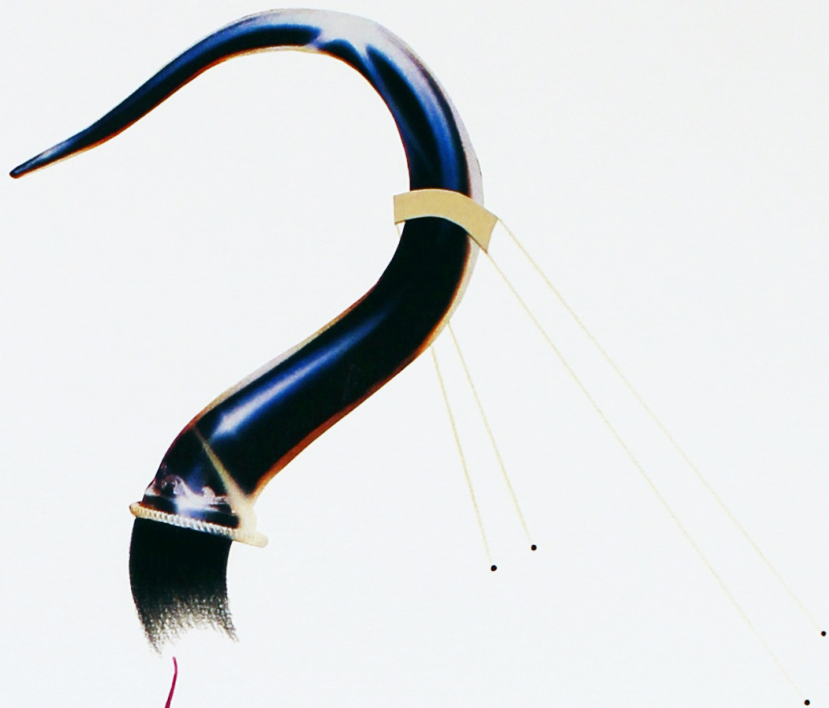
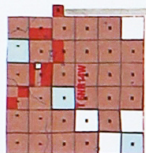


Too Much & Not Enough, 2024, Watercolor, graphite, colored pencil, and collaged elements on archival paper, 33¼ x 24⅝ (framed),
84.45 x 62.56 cm (framed), NANOT0006





Hook, Line, & Sink Her, 2024, Watercolor, graphite, colored pencil, and collaged elements on archival paper, 33¼ x 24⅝ (framed),
84.45 x 62.56 cm (framed), NNO0005





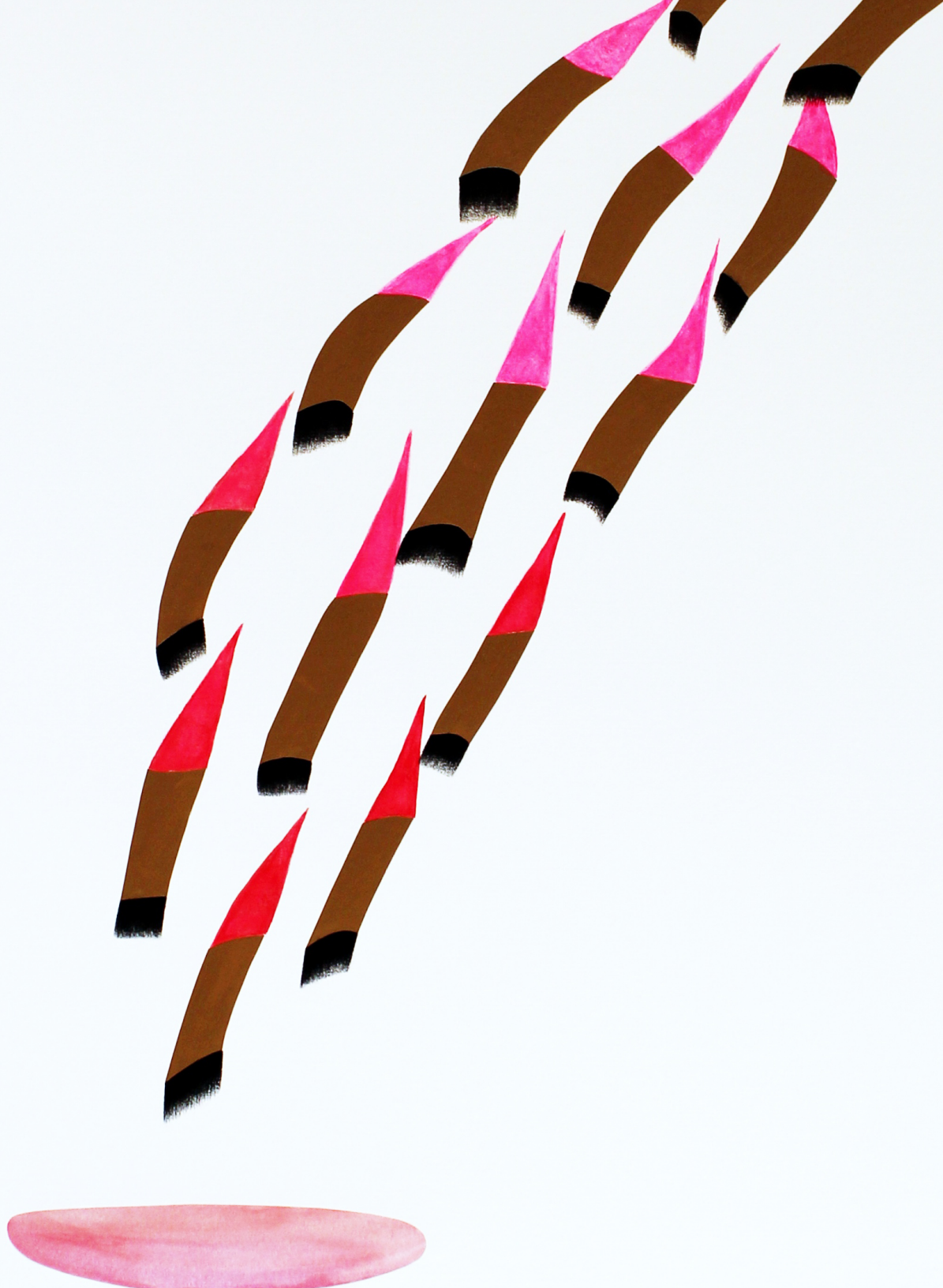


Surrender, 2024, Terra Cotta clay, steel bar, fabric scrap, acrylic paint, and artificial sinew, 8 x 8 x 48 in., 20.32 x 20.32 x 121.92 cm,
NANOT0014



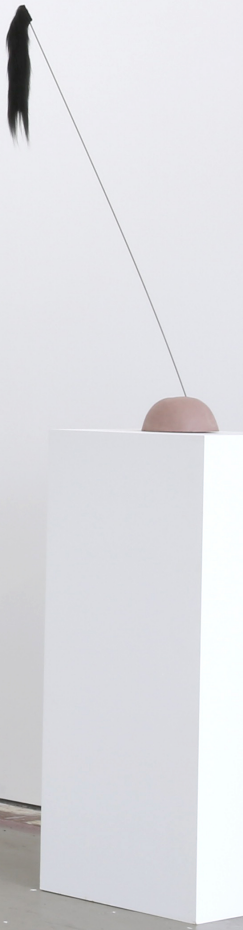


Incoming, 2024, Watercolor, graphite, colored pencil, and collaged elements on archival paper, 33³/₄ x 24⁵/₈ (framed),
85.72 x 62.56 cm (framed), NANOT0008





One Pink Flag, 2024, Terra Cotta clay and pink stake flag, 21 x 7 x 7 in., 53.34 x 17.78 x 17.78 cm, NANOT0010







Off the Rails, 2024, Watercolor, graphite, colored pencil, and collaged elements on archival paper, 33¼ x 22⅝ (framed),
84.45 x 57.48 cm (framed), NNO0006





Skullcap , 2024, Terra Cotta clay, steel bar, faux fur, and nylon thread, 48½ x 8 x 8 in., 123.19 x 20.32 x 20.32 cm, NANO T0009



Her Nickname was String Bean, 2024, Found stool, leather, faux fur, plastic corn pellets, acrylic paint, and artificial sinew, 25 x 23 x 14 in., 63.50 x 58.42 x 35.56 cm. NANOT0013





Rattling Flags(still), 2024, video, duration: 1 minutes, 40 seconds, NFS



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