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Sharon Mizota "Eight ceramic octopus traps? Why Daniel Silva's show at Baert Gallery has us hooked", *Los Angeles Times* (June 23, 2018), online [ill.]

Eight ceramic octopus traps? Why Daniel Silva's show at Baert Gallery has us hooked



"Tako Tako [8]" (detail) by Daniel Silva (2018). (Joshua White / Daniel Silva and Baert Gallery)

There's something inexplicably compelling about Daniel Silva's latest exhibition at Baert Gallery. Inspired by a residency in Japan, the London artist has created a series of works that incorporate traditional Japanese materials. The result is a network of visual poems that revolve around a central tension.

The show opens with "Wax and Guts," an installation of whimsical, kidney-shaped black bags made from the sails of fishing boats. Each is filled with rice and suspended from two lengths of rubber tubing joined with a knob of beeswax. Some of the bags curve upward as if drawn by an invisible force; it's unclear if they are about to ascend or have just come to rest.

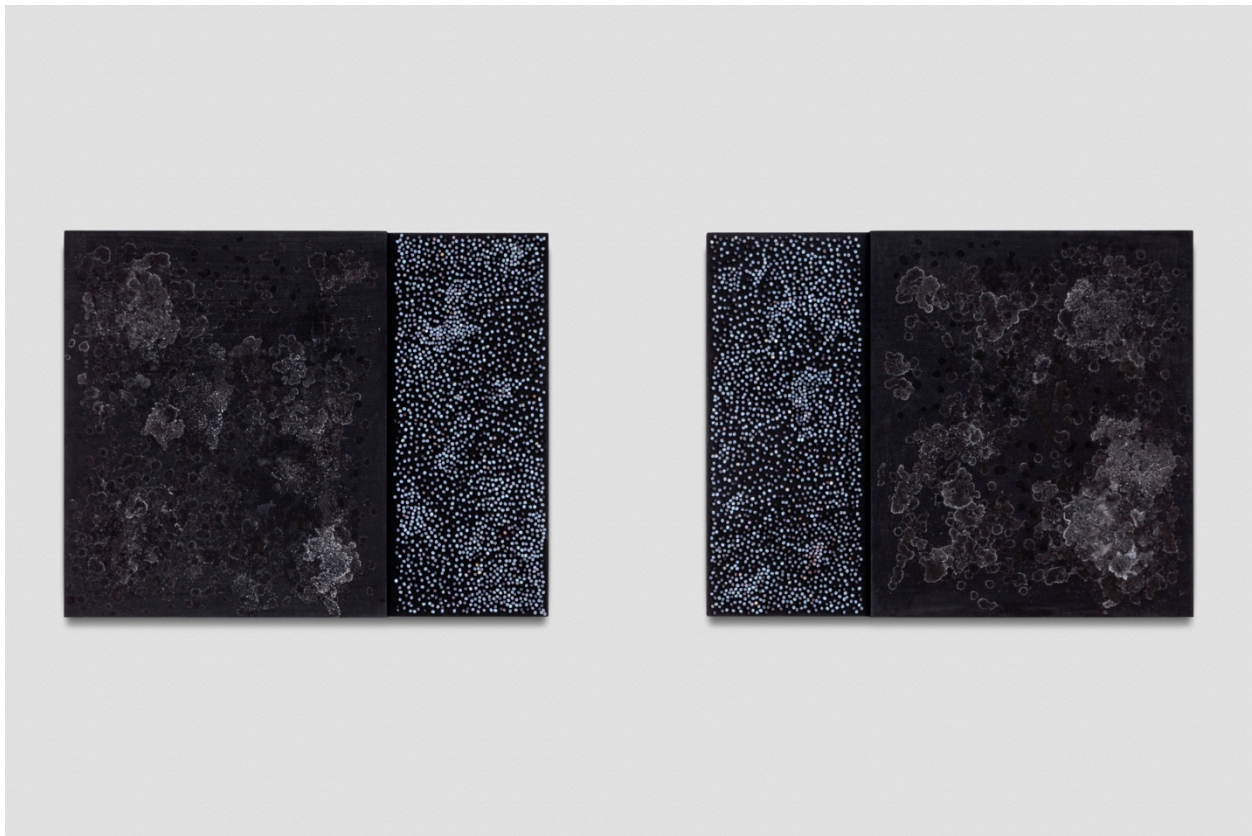


"Wax and Guts" by Daniel Silva (2018). (Joshua White / Daniel Silva and Baert Gallery)

The bags vaguely resemble bodily organs. The shape of the beeswax mimics the shape of high-voltage ceramic insulators Silva observed on Japanese power lines. These themes of the body, energy and fishing extend across several pieces in the next room.

The floor sculpture "[+ -]" is an assortment of white, fist-size plaster pieces, also kidney-shaped, that contain magnets. Their arrangement on the floor reflects their attraction or repulsion to one another.

"Tako Tako [8]" features a row of eight broken black ceramic pots — traditional Japanese octopus traps. (It seems the octopuses have made a run for it.) Mounted on the wall above each pot is something that looks like a gray pompom, but turns out to be a magnet covered with iron filings standing on end. Again, the piece captures a push-pull movement toward and against.



"One Drop — One Nail | One Nail — One Drop" by Daniel Silva (2018). (Joshua White / Daniel Silva and Baert Gallery)

"One Drop — One Nail | One Nail — One Drop" is a pair of wall pieces that seem to have been constructed according to the instructions in the title. In each piece, a panel filled with nails contrasts with a panel filled with the residue of saltwater drops. Solid and fluid, hard and soft, side by side.

The show also features prints made directly from fish, a charcoal rubbing made from a rock, and more octopus pot sculptures. Although none of the pieces is particularly interesting on its own, as a whole the exhibition creates an open-ended web of associations around a central dynamic, embodied in the act of fishing: the tug of war between a person who wants to eat and an animal that wants to survive.



"Gyotaku I Onomichi, Japan" by Daniel Silva (2017). (Joshua White / Daniel Silva and Baert Gallery)