



SALON 94

ARTFORUM

Critics Picks: Timothy Washington

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View of "Love They Neighbor," 2014.

Los Angeles

Timothy Washington

Craft Contemporary

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Noted for his "technical unorthodoxy," Los Angeles-based artist Timothy Washington reveals the inextricability of art and craft, using street detritus, Christian imagery, and warped, alien-like human forms to question the relationships between humanity, spirituality, and the cosmos. Formally trained at Choinard Art Institute in the 1960s, Washington was a young member of the black assemblage-art movement that emerged in LA in the '60s; his mixed-media drypoints were included in LACMA's first contemporary show of black artists, in 1971. While Washington has continued his career through the



present, selling to private collections and participating in group exhibitions, "Love They Neighbor" is his solo museum debut, considered by many to be overdue.

The show includes a breadth of work that emphasizes Washington's long-term experimental approach, and specifically his irreverent use of the materials at hand. The mixed-media drypoint *IA*, 1972, was created in reaction to receiving his draft notification, which is defaced and affixed to the piece. It is one of his best-known works, but most of those that follow stray from this graphic and straightforwardly political approach. The *Energy Source: First Warning*, 1990, is a towering carved-wood figure, both alien and human, with wheels for arms. The three sculptures, *Love*, *Glorifying Womanhood*, and *Several Faces, One Race*, are joyful and chaotic amalgams of children's toys, mirrors, barometers, and a myriad of other findings, and all four are made from Washington's preferred glue-and-cotton composite, of which he says, "I am still picking cotton." His series of hanging washboard assemblages have faces reminiscent of African masks, as do the twenty-one altered wooden spoons in *Spoons*, 2013. *Black Cross* and *White Cross*, both 1993, testify to Washington's Christian influences, a strong theme throughout his career.

With an eccentric mosaic of influences and materials, Washington blends his deep-seated folk sensibility with the politics of found objects, all shot through with a distinct New Age flare. Disparate elements coalesce to speak towards Washington's idea of "space consciousness," suggesting that all objects and histories can be a mystic's tools for seeing beyond our earthly experience and our human tendency towards distinction. Collectively, the work beams an intense and sometimes ecstatic message of unity.