

REGEN PROJECTS

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Goings On About Town

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By: Johanna Fateman

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For his recent solo exhibition at the Whitney, this ambitious American artist, who was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, installed an operational cotton-gin motor in a transparent booth, using the machinery as both a sculpture and a sound generator to transmit some ambient sense of slavery's past into the present. The evocative works in Beasley's new show, "Reunion," at the Casey Kaplan gallery, include haunting figurative sculptures made from stiffened garments and draped fabric; wall-mounted abstractions that resemble traditional paintings; and assemblages of found materials—T-shirts, do-rags, pinecones, and dirt—encased in resin, to form objects that the artist terms "slabs." The show's keystone might be "The Road," a two-sided monolith installed on the floor, inspired by Beasley's annual journey to a family reunion in rural Virginia. The striking piece continues the artist's ongoing exploration of the relationships between Black landownership, labor, and personal ancestry. One side greets visitors with a yellow sun, a green pasture, and a two-lane highway; the other is a penumbral monochrome of dyed raw cotton and strips of rubber tire.

— Johanna Fateman