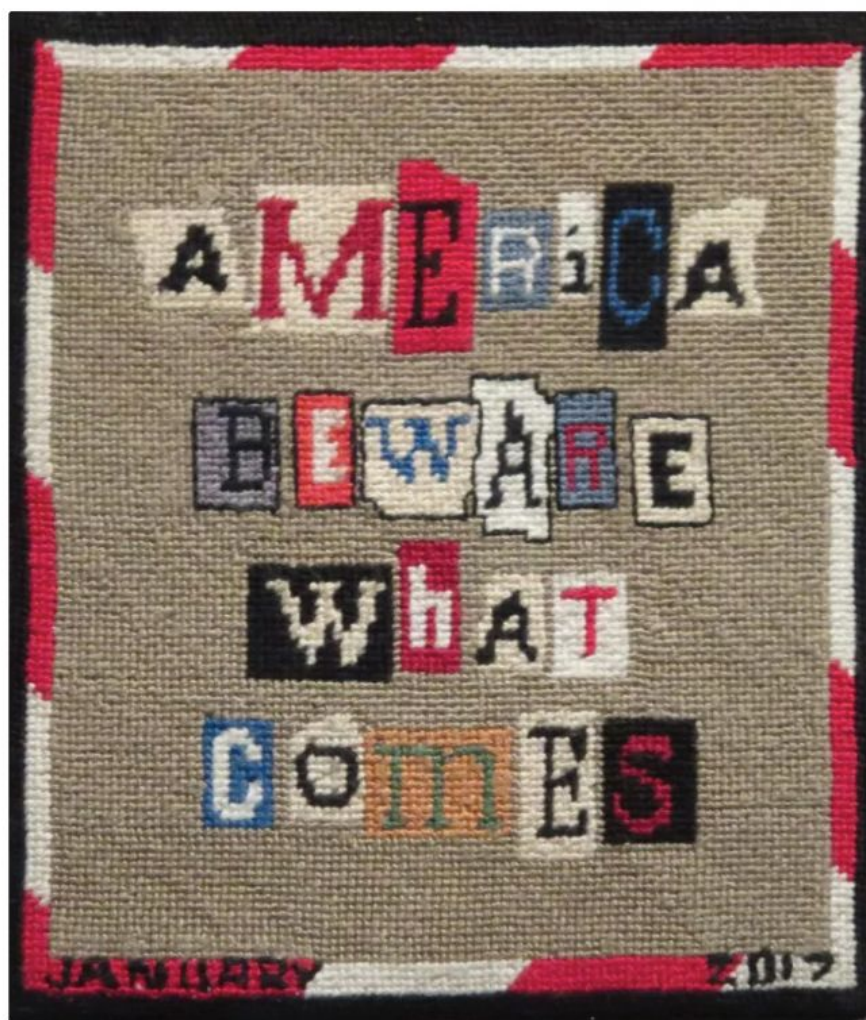


## Uprooted in DUMBO

Liz Daly · December 10, 2017 · [Leave a Reply](#)

Made it to the opening of **Uproot** at **Smack Mellon** in Dumbo, Brooklyn. Featuring work by some 50 artists, the show makes no bones about its political bent – all of the works are in response to the 2016 US Presidential election. While there is a sense of rage and outrage in some of them, most of the works seem to confront issues, especially the environment and immigration rather than point fingers. As the exhibit press release notes: "In these troubling, uncertain times, it remains important to turn to artists and creative thinkers for guidance". I couldn't agree more!

Many of the works are large scale, especially the fibre art ones, but there are also paintings, prints, videos. Here are a few works that caught my eye:



January 2017, Rebecca Graves, 2017, Needlepoint

This needlepoint by **Rebecca Graves** was featured on the exhibit brochure, and describes the tone of much of the work. However, I would say that her admonition is relevant, no matter who is in power.



*Still Structure II, Linda Cunningham, 2012, Pastel, ink, collage*

**Linda Cunningham's** piece addresses environmental concerns in a straightforward fashion. Photo transfers of left-over skeletons of former iron and steel factories in the Ruhr Valley, Germany (but they really could be anywhere) are overlaid with pastel and ink renderings of endangered ancient olive trees (over 400 years old) in Apulia, southern Italy, demonstrating the enormous contradictions between what people do to the earth, and how nature nourishes the planet.





*Veritas Inverso, Cecile Chong, 2017, Encaustic and Western Arborvitae*

**Cecile Chong** took the title of the show literally, and, after much effort, found a young tree with a root ball, which she then inverted and coated with encaustic paint (wax and resin) in the colors of the U.S. flag, to demonstrate how people are feeling today.





*Green Unplugged (Expanded), Borinquen Gallo, 2017, Debris netting, plastic bags, caution tape and URL cables*

I like how **Borinquen Gallo** transforms recycled garbage bags and "caution" tape into an intriguing tapestry, *Green Unplugged*, exploring themes of environmental degradation, excessive consumption and climate change denial.





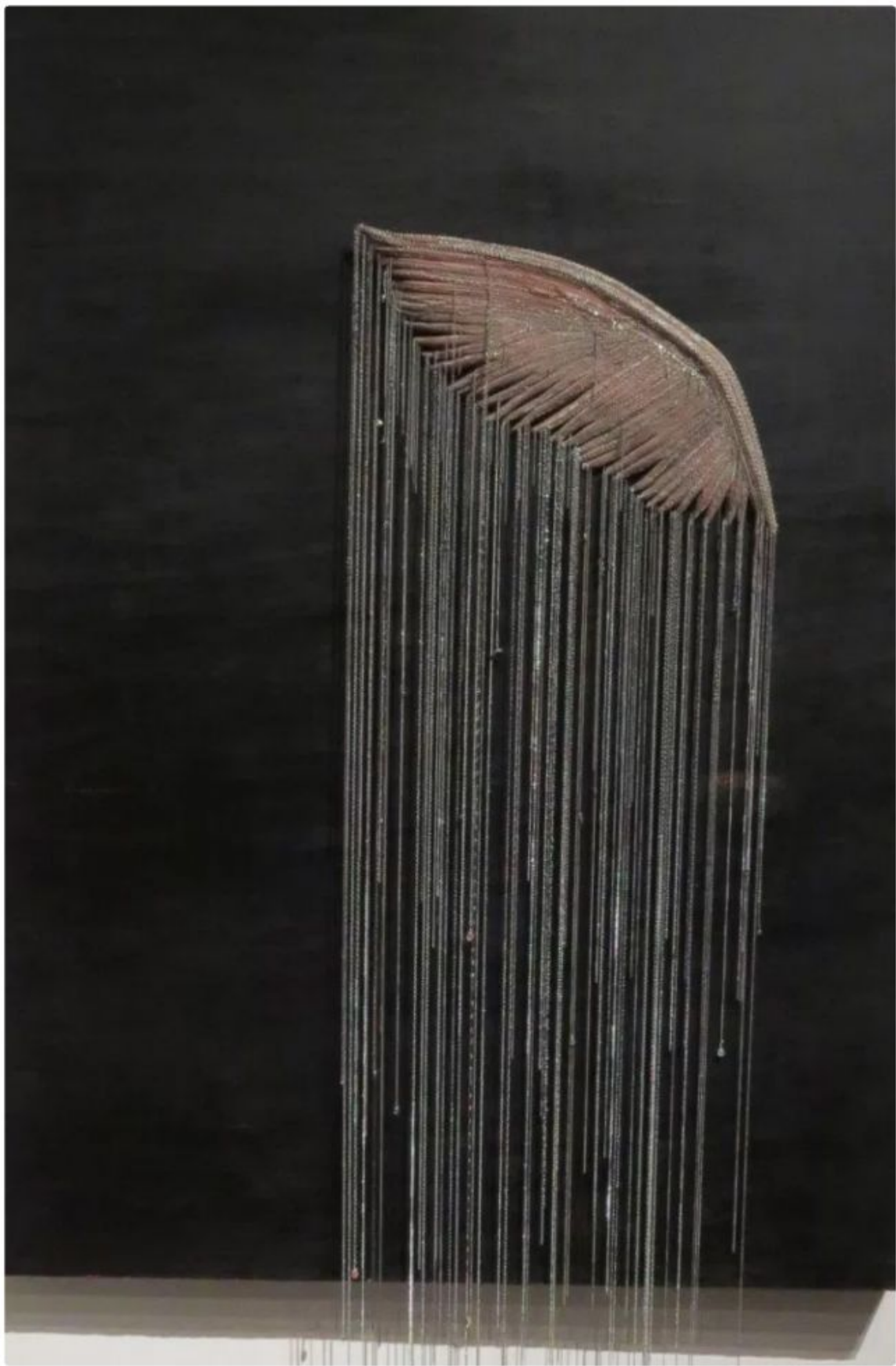
*AD ASTRA, DaaPo Reo, 2017, Cotton, polyester, vintage African textiles, leather suitcase*

*AD ASTRA* is one of a series of 12 flags being created by **DaaPo Reo**, that speak to the issues facing Africa in the 21st century. The artist moved to Brooklyn from Nigeria several years ago. Next to this flag is a wall text which alludes to the journey some African men make from the Continent, to South America, then to the US. *AD ASTRA* means "to the stars" in Latin...



*Maquila, Ana de la Cueva, Embroidery on linen with hoop*

U.S.-Mexico border issues are the subtext for **Ana de la Cueva's** *Maquila*; be sure to watch the video (also part of the piece) which shows the work being stitched by a commercial sewing machine whose movements are timed to lively background music.



*Arrested Symphony*, Esperanza Cortés, 2017, Jewelry chains on clay sculpture, encaustic on wood panel

Having just seen **Esperanza Cortés'** work at Longwood Art Gallery (my review [here](#)) I was delighted to see her *Arrested Symphony*, using jewelry in an intriguing way.





*America's Social Contract, Diana Schmertz, 2017, Watercolor on laser cut paper*

*America's Social Contract* by **Diana Schmertz** is a bit over 2' high and 14' long. Each of the 7 panels is painted with a watercolor image of two or more hands of diverse races reaching and pulling each other up. When you get closer, you'll notice that the paper on which the image has been painted, has been cut out with the text of the U.S. Constitution!

This is a very small sampling of the works in this show. *Uproot* runs until December 31st, but don't wait until the end of the year to see it. The gallery is also hosting a number of talks and performances so get over to **Smack Mellon**, 92 Plymouth Street, in DUMBO, Brooklyn.