

Art in America

Danica Sachs, "One work: Untitled (Cooperative Trees)", Art in America, February 14, 2022. Online.
<https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/sahar-khoury-untitled-cooperative-trees-1234619091/>
 #recipient_hashed=c135b88c1506d9393cb55891099012819f9eef6b4c9f2b9e6b3bdee92ca742c7.

One Work: "Untitled (Cooperative Trees)"



Sahar Khoury, *Untitled (cooperative trees)*, 2021, ceramic, powder coated steel, paper textile mâché, resin, 35 by 20 by 8 inches.

Sahar Khoury spent part of 2021 in residence at Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito, California. In the small forest of new works comprising her exhibition "Orchard" at Rebecca Camacho Presents, it's clear that the foggy hills of coastal scrub and cypress found their way into the forms of Khoury's sculptures. While her prior work was often preoccupied with interior spaces and peppered with domestic references, these new works present a view of the landscape that is as distinct and personal as if it were her own home.

Untitled (cooperative trees), 2021, measures just taller than knee-high. Atop a white plinth with spindly legs resembling the posts of a cast-iron fence, a tableau sets four ceramic trees against an indistinct blue-and-green background. The latter surface, made with a papier-mâché process that incorporates textile fibers, takes on color differently than clay, and Khoury has played up the contrast by affixing glossy abstract ceramic forms to this highly pigmented material. With a wormlike form creeping through one area and a solid rectangle of deeper navy hinged from the top, the resulting composition is a surreal blend of sea and sky.

Indeed, Khoury's interpretations of the natural world verge on the absurd. With shaggy, loose branches piled onto roughly formed brown trunks, Khoury's simplistic trees are mostly set off in pairs, one tree balancing another on its crown. This creates a playful sense of personification, with one tree giving another a boost, perhaps a better view.

Khoury colors the reverse side of the sculpture's blue-green surface a pale gray flecked with green and purple, and adds a thick, bending line of magenta, a dreamy take on a California sunset in winter. Here again, Khoury abstracts and interrupts what might appear to be a

traditional landscape: a peach ceramic well or pool is appended near the center, and a deep amoeba-like emerald form hangs from the top left, like the canopy of another tree punctuating the sky. While one small representation of a tree lingers at lower left, the composition seems to abandon orientation, preferring a sense of atmosphere to the flipside's emphasis on gravity.