

# ARTnews

## ‘Super-Rough’ Runs Through This Weekend in Soho

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At “Super-Rough,” a sculpture exhibition presented by the Outsider Art Fair and guest curated by Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, materials come first. In his title for the show, Murakami acknowledges its almost diametrically opposed spirit to Superflat, a 21st-century Pop art movement—of which Murakami is the primary theorist and practitioner—influenced by Japan’s postwar consumer culture. Superflat artists reflect and appropriate the aesthetics of our mediated worlds, hoping to subvert them (though ironically, the work of artists like Murakami and Kaws typically makes for great merch); the artists in “Super-Rough” dive into the essential with forms unclouded by a mediated gaze.

There is nothing in this exhibition to remind one of the hyperreality of the screen, or of the slick surfaces of consumer goods. Human and animal bodies are reimagined in ways that are sometimes disturbing, but never less than astonishing. Found materials,

from buttons and dolls to wood, wire, glue, and yarn, are repurposed to extraordinary effect. *Root Carved Dog* by an unknown artist, for example, is a creature with a body made out of a twisted root and a face embellished with glass eyes. This is a dog of dreams.

*Root Carved Dog* is only one of 250 works displayed on a single gigantic pedestal running down the center of the gallery or along three of the room's walls. To see the others, visit the show before it closes this Sunday.

## JOHN BYAM



John Byam, *Untitled*, n.d.

A trailer-park employee and part-time grave digger from Oneonta, New York, John Byam (1929–2013) made miniature sculptural works from scraps of wood, glue, and sawdust. Usually, these pieces represented everyday objects—a chair, desk, traffic light, helicopter, camera tank, or rocket—or figures, including one image of the Statue of Liberty. At times Byam would add some ink or paint, as on a sculpture of a house with its entrance labeled “front door.”