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Art in Review; Fiona Banner

By ROBERTA SMITH

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Nude

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In her latest works, the British artist Fiona Banner presents her own eccentric version of drawing from life. These works involve a lot of language, as might be expected from someone known for written, billboard-sized blow-by-blow accounts of the action in movies like "Lawrence of Arabia," "Top Gun" and "Don't Look Back." Ms. Banner is also the author of "Nam," a 1,000-page book that similarly details the action in six movies about the Vietnam War, starting with "Apocalypse Now." These movies are primarily about men or for men. Ms. Banner confronts this orientation by extending it in real time while drowning it in language, replacing one kind of obsession with another.

Here she adds sculpture to the mix in two minutely detailed records of drawing sessions before live, nude models, written (in pencil, marker or incised) on the tail fins of mothballed Harrier jump jets. In both form and function, these shapes are implicitly male, like the artists who have historically made most drawings from the nude. A third piece, "Bird," on a Jaguar tail fin, shifts the focus to nature and a gender neutral activity, describing in overlapping notations a sparrow in a tree outside the artist's window. The pieces suffer from a certain obviousness, partly because they suggest a strange amalgam of Richard Prince's work. But they also push Ms. Banner's wry, pointed involvement with language, perception and the male gaze in a new direction -- one that also circles back to previous interests, since an attraction to fighter planes led Ms. Banner to war movies in the first place. ROBERTA SMITH