

Helen Mirra
ĉielarka aktivec'

Helen Mirra's primary works for this exhibition manifest in linen, wool and silk. They were made consecutively over the past 13 months. One was constructed each month, and is titled after the month's name in Esperanto. Unquestionably of great presence despite their modesty of material, size and method, they signal something profound besides their balanced material pleasure, and challenge the standard vocabulary of apprehending visual art.

Just as each of André Cadere's (1934-1978) round bars of wood had an exception within its pattern, the sculpture on display in the exhibition constitutes an exception within the pattern of monthly woven pieces. An exception referring to another exception, while also inexactly intimating it in form.

As measurements of time and being, the 13 woven pieces capture in yarn the somatic activities of standing, extending arms, articulating hands, breathing, and sensing. They are however not to be reduced to the time at the loom. Considering Helen Mirra's holistic approach to art-making, and in particular the aspect that since 2006 she has been engaged in an ongoing project in which daylong walks generate artworks and vice versa, they can be understood with Lawrence Rinder, as „in a way, abstracted artifacts“ of the practice of walking.

The works in the exhibition are installed on the wall yet negate painting in their construct. They have a slight though overt dimensional and object-like nature, and measurements given in three dimensions, yet do not declare themselves as sculpture. And although they are woven, they do not particularly engage with the specific tradition of weaving as art. They rather exist in close proximity to ancient quotidian practices of concatenating fiber for baskets or textiles – though do not ally with a craft lineage any more than they do with an art lineage. The artist determines the particularities of their form and the rhythms of dyed and undyed yarns by a preset system that colludes with chance: she has used only the yarns at hand in her storage, priorly sourced from small manufacturers (while this kind of ethic is typical of Mirra's practice, it seems, now, to presage what has become more obvious to the rest of us this year). The size of the work derives from two different looms, a small tapestry loom with colored warp and undyed weft and an even smaller one with reverse vertical and horizontal threads. Arranged according to hue, shade and tint spectrum, coin flips decide which yarn to use from these orders, and how to set the loom pattern. Changes of colour within one work occur simply because the previous yarn was consumed and the next from the sequence gets used.

Analog to the making, the works take time to be perceived. It is beautiful and exciting to slowly notice how a simple system of humble means and restricted parameters unfolds an abundance of variation in hue, differentiation in texture and nuances in gridded pattern, enhanced by changing light. With a reduced set of parameters somewhat like Sol Lewitt's (1928-2007) or Gego's (1912-1994) — while emphatically working with an open system— Mirra arrives at an unfathomable complexity. Her annulment of binaries gives way to an in-betweenness — consonant with the Buddhist concept alluded to in the title for the exhibition where „cessation and vibrancy are not divergent“.

During the time of her parallel exhibitions „ĉielarka aktivec'“ in Berlin and „la malplena ĉambro estas bela“ at Large Glass, London, the artist will engage in 30 daylong walks circling Mount Tamalpais in Northern California, where she lives. This triangulative moment is accompanied by the booklet „Rainbow Activity“, available in print in the galleries and for self-print on the galleries' homepages. This booklet connects to and continues Mirra's catalog raisonné „Edge Habitat Materials“ (2014). In lieu of seeing the geographically-distant exhibitions in person, an image-extended color PDF is available online as well.

Helen Mirra was born in Rochester, New York in 1970 and lives in Muir Beach, CA. In 2015 she participated in the 12th Havana Biennial with a month-long walking project. She also participated in the 30th São Paulo Biennial (2012) and the 50th Venice Biennial (2003). A fifteen year survey (1996-2010) of her work was presented at Culturgest in Lisbon in 2014. Major exhibitions include „Acts for placing woolen and linen“ at Cample Line (2020), Thornhill SCT; „No Horizon“ at the Berkeley Art Museum (2019); „Gehen, weben/Caminare, tessere“ at Kunst Meran/Merano Arte (2017); „Hourly Directional“ at Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and with Ernst Karel at the MIT List Visual Arts Center (both Cambridge MA and in 2014); „gehend (Field Recordings 1-3)“, which was held at three venues: Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich (2012), KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, and Bonner Kunstverein (both 2011), „65 Instants“ at the Berkeley Art Museum (2003), „Declining Interval Lands“ at the Whitney Museum in New York (2002); and „Sky-wreck“ at the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (2001). Mirra has been awarded various fellowships and residencies, including the Guggenheim Fellowship (2020), OCA in Oslo (2007/08), DAAD in Berlin (2005/2006), and IASPIS in Stockholm (2011).

Exhibition period: September 12 – November 14, 2020

Opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11:00 – 18:00

Please contact the gallery for further information and press images

ARTISTS: CHRISTIAN ANDERSSON MIROSLAW BALKÁ ANN BÖTTCHER GERARD BYRNE JOHN COPLANS JONAS DAHLBERG ANN EDHOLM SPENCER FINCH HREINN FRIDFINNSSON ANTONY GORMLEY FRANKA HÖRNSCHEMEYER GUNILLA KLINGBERG EVA LÖFDAHL MEUSER ESKO MÄNNIKKÖ SIROUS NAMAZI WALTER NIEDERMAYR MARJETICA POTRČ HÅKAN REHNBERG ULRICH RÜCKRIEM MICHAEL SCHMIDT FLORIAN SLOTAWA LEON TARASEWICZ JOHAN THURFJELL ALAN UGLOW GÜNTER UMBERG MAGNUS WALLIN RÉMY ZAUGG

GALERIE NORDENHAKE
berlin

Galerie Nordenhake GmbH
Lindenstrasse 34
DE 10969 Berlin
T +49 30 206 1483
F +49 30 2061 4848
www.nordenhake.com
berlin@nordenhake.com