

HERNANDO'S

Alika Cooper
Golden Bars
December 5, 2020–February 7, 2021

Press Release:

Hernando's Hideaway is pleased to announce *Golden Bars*, an exhibition of outdoor sculpture works by Los Angeles based artist Alika Cooper. For the exhibition, four bronze cages and one neon sculpture dutifully hang on delicate stands. Assembled from fabric fringe and remnants of discarded material, the works duplicate classical decorative motifs embodying a simple exteriorization; a restrained expression or perhaps tension of a hidden inner life.

Similar to the instruments of botany—the Cloche or a Wardian Case, made to protect plants from frost or allowed for the worldwide distribution of rare and delicate plants—the cages, removed from utilitarian use, pose as decorative objects. The cages transform into forms of interiority, generating their own tensions in feeling, a passion giving these instruments a tongue. Though the light-ray of the world refracts in the glass of the cloche or the terrarium, the glass does not itself see.

Nietzsche wrote that the mind must simplify, to ponder in such a way as that of a cow, for his work to be readable; for a cow knows how to ruminate, to chew the cud, to meditate on mediation. To remain a modern thinker is to forgo the moment where nature is converted from a mechanism into a creative act. It is unthinkable that the mechanism—the medium—thinks.

Similar to Cooper's bronze suits, the functionless cages stand in for supposedly dead mediums brought symbolically to speak, to a will of their own, in their transformative ability of perception. Absent of metaphor or allegory, they become a conduit for the generative thinking of sense. The cages' bars transform into a playful form of freedom, generating out of this devotion to sense, nature, to the bars...

Special thanks to Matthew Cooper, Enosh Baker, and James Naish for their help realizing this project.

Alika Cooper (b. 1979, Guam) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received both her MFA and BFA from California College of the Arts, San Francisco. Her solo and two-person exhibitions include *Madeleine Cake* SITUATIONS, New York; *UPBRAID*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles; *Wet Suits*, Good Weather Gallery, Little Rock; *Have A Sex*, fort gondo, Saint Louis; *The Disguised Edge*, MULHERIN, Toronto; and *GLASS*, Eleanor Harwood Gallery, San Francisco. She was the recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Foundation grant, the Magic Trillium Press Yesland Prize, and the Jack and Gertrude Murphy Fellowship. She has participated in *The Viewing Program* at The Drawing Center, New York; *MOTION PICTURE* at The Saint Louis Art Museum; and was Artist in Residence at Galleria Studio Legale in Marzano Appio, Italy.