

Loop
Liesl Raff
Sharp Projects

Opening September 24, 2021 from 4 to 8 pm
September 24 - October 29, 2021

Upon entering Liesl Raff's solo exhibition, the visitor is positioned within a cylindrical tundrel of straw that follows the walls of the main gallery space. The piece, *corn dolly 2* (2021) is made from straw and kept together by an industrial nylon net manually knotted smaller.

The *loop* (2021) works are square-casted and two-toned colored latex, like the costume worn by a Harlequin, the comedic archetype. The different textures of latex embedded with rope creates a specific awareness of the materials inviting one to discover its skin-like texture. They are looped and draped onto short bamboo rods, seeming to give the objects a purpose or a possible usefulness. While the latex and rope point in the direction of some sort of action or ritual, the straw work creates a space for this — an open or transitional room.

The straw form follows the gallery walls and softens the room as it disrupts the 90-degree angle between wall and floor. The shape of the work is inspired from barriers used to control water and wind caused erosion in desert areas. The material and title of the work, *corn dolly 2* (2021) references the folklore tradition of making a dolly of the last straw of the harvest, in which the spirit of the corn and fertility was to survive during winter until the sowing in the spring.

Both the straw and latex materials give a strong haptic value to Raff's works inviting a bodily experience. These physicalities do not result in anthropomorphic work directly, but there is a connection between passive and active. The subtle and spiritual coexist, sometimes they mirror each other as parallel narrations, sometimes the one consumes the other, superimposes it and leaves the other invisible. The other is nonetheless there and in Raff's work the other is never too far away.