

NOON Projects Presents

I Am Vertical

By Johanna Jackson

Curated by
Libby Werbel

October 27 –
December 9, 2023

Opening:
October 27, 2023, 7 – 9 PM

NOON Projects is honored to present *I Am Vertical*, a solo exhibition by Johanna Jackson, curated by Libby Werbel. In *I Am Vertical*, Werbel has asked Jackson to share a new body of functional sculptures. These works, created specifically to be hung from trees, reference a horticultural tradition of wrapping large river rocks with wire and hanging them from branches to encourage new directions in growth. This practice is similar to the technique of *espalier*, and is based on the concept of gravitropism, “the coordinated process of differential growth by a plant in response to gravity.” These weights train branches to grow more horizontally, creating space between them to amplify exposure to the sun and ultimately help the tree bear more fruit.

In place of traditional river stones, Jackson has meticulously crafted an array of tiny clay shapes, tying them together in long strands which create a series of symbolic compositions. This body of work exhibits the familiar visual language of Jackson’s signature style; pastel tones in amorphous shapes slowly reveal themselves to be representations of tangible objects: a pomegranate, a penny, a candle, a slice of cake. This assortment of both familiar and unfamiliar symbols, hung vertically, can be read from top to bottom, or vice versa, as visual poems. To accompany this series of hanging poems, Jackson also shares a selection of drawings inspired by the precious things trees produce and hold: fruit, flowers, spiderwebs.

Like much of Jackson’s work, it’s easy to interpret these pieces as being imbued with a magical quality; a series of charms or spells meant to protect and encircle, to create an opportunity for dialogue with a divine not-knowing, to welcome in the sun, and also to remind us that we can bend, be influenced and change our orientation to our surroundings.

Jackson’s practice is often dedicated to creating utilitarian form through self-taught craft. She states, “I am interested in the role of objects in a good life. What could a thing do?” She is most known for her vessels made of porcelain—large vases, tiny cups and asymmetrical bowls—as well as textile work made up of quilted pillows and blankets that adorn pieces of furniture in her own home and those of collectors and institutions.

This is the first time Jackson is showing this body of work. When hung vertically *en masse* on a tree, these individual poems become an anthology, and the sculptures themselves work together to create a proto container. The bent branches slowly and inevitably reveal a bowl of negative space, drawing apart their physical offshoots to hold something intangible: the light, and the potential of new fruit.

–Libby Werbel

NOON Projects is a gallery in Chinatown, Los Angeles. Our program showcases artists who work from the heart, with a focus on queer-ness, the divine, the natural world, craft, and social practices. We host an ongoing program of dinners, concerts, meditation groups, and community happenings.

We aim to create a welcoming space for artists and the community to connect and flourish. Please come by and see us – you are very welcome here.

NOON Projects
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Thursday to Saturday
Noon–6pm
And by Appointment

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