



Blue Womb (detail), 2023, hand woven and dyed textiles, linen threads, cotton, my blue shirt, bed sheets, baby blanket, 120 x 101 inches

JULIA BLAND

Rivers on the Inside

April 25 – May 25, 2024

Opening Reception:

Thursday, April 25, 6–8 pm

Rivers follow down from far places, high places hardly imagined. Their path divides the land and binds it, bringing new things. Some things come that nourish or poison, some that stay and some that pass. There are rivers on the inside too, drawing lines across my heart. These pictures are like maps. They are stories woven in my body, like rivers across the earth.

My body hovers in the crevices of these words, but the woven structure is a

much older language. Its knowledge lives in fingers guiding their threads: from one to many, from many to one. We walk wrapped in its arms. We sleep under its weight. And when we speak, its rhythms echo in the hollow cave above our tongue.

– Julia Bland, 2024

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new textile and painting based works by Julia Bland entitled *Rivers on the Inside*. Employing hand weaving, dying, embroidery, oil paint, braiding, and personal fabrics, Bland builds the architecture of her compositions through an intuitive process of assembly, de-assembly, gathering, and sorting.

Rivers on the Inside presents monumental, wall-based works that trace her experiences through the first years of motherhood. For example, *Helper*, a joyful reflection of her daughter's small hands, includes areas woven on the loom and dyed, then rewoven by hand off the loom. Personal fabrics such as her family's clothes and bed sheets are braided together with traditional art materials such as canvas and linen. The braids are dyed and stitched together across the surface, forming boundaries and also crossing them, conjuring an abstract fluidity between art and life.

Blue Womb rests in solitude, considering the particular loneliness that comes when even those closest are out of reach. Small pieces of a receiving blanket from the hospital where her daughter was born peek out from the corners of an active grid. *Keeper of the Vineyards* frames the body as architecture, re-establishing the center of gravity and strength in the midst of chaos. In the central opening, a section of her mother's shirt from the 1970's is dyed purple and stitched into the curves. These recognizable materials assert their particular place in history, resisting the relative meaning of otherwise abstract form. They are cracks in the continuous present, revealing stark moments of longing.

Moving away from symmetry, these complex interwoven structures generate a shifting gestalt, wherein the geometric center of the composition continually moves from one place to another across the surface. Additionally, the process embeds palpable material construction with various optical illusions. The results increase a sense of cognitive dissonance, as Bland engages individual perception and autonomy while at the same time questioning it.

Julia Bland (b. 1986, Palo Alto, CA; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) received her BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and her MFA from The Yale School of Art. She has been an artist in residence at The MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, The Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Lighthouse Works, The Sharpe-Walentas Space Program, and The Shandaken Project: Storm King. She has received awards including The Milton and Sally Avery Fellowship from Yaddo, The Carol Schlosberg Memorial Prize, NYFA/NYSCA fellowship in Craft/Sculpture, The Florence Leif Award for Excellence in Painting, and the Natasha And Jacques Gelman Travel Fellowship. Recent solo exhibitions include Embers, Maya Frodeman Gallery, Jackson Hole, WY; Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago, IL; *The Lighthouse Works*, Fisher's Island, NY; Helena Anrather, New York, NY; and On Stellar Rays, New York, NY. Recent group exhibitions include The Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY; John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, WI; Chambers Fine Art, Beijing, China; and Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY. This will be her second solo exhibition at the gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 300 Broome Street between Eldridge Street and Forsyth Street. Hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 11am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com.