

**Kara Hamilton**

*Live Wire, Tender Stakes*

May 16 - June 22, 2024

**COOPER COLE** is pleased to present, *Live Wire, Tender Stakes*, a new sculptural installation by gallery artist Kara Hamilton. This exhibition marks the artist's third solo exhibit at the gallery and will run from May 16 - June 22, 2024 in the gallery's west exhibition space.

**JK:**

Let's begin at the beginning. This show continues a (series? of ideas? of experiments?) that you started back in 2020, and I wanted to know about the genesis of these works.

**KH:**

It was the beginning of lockdown, and I loved the slowness. I went to the studio every day, without a plan, feeling compelled to make these object drawings. All of a sudden priorities had shifted. Things I had been thinking about—like resourcefulness, repair and restoration, solidarity (particularly with a non-human world) and transparency (in general)—all became, and remain, urgent. This made me kind of optimistic that toilet paper (the most valued currency at the time) might save us from the ruins of late stage capitalism. I feel like these objects are maybe agents of hope while simultaneously signalling surrender.

**JK:**

I've never heard the term "object drawing" before.

**KH:**

I might have made the term up. It's really about how I feel making them. They seem like extractions (a literal drawing out, in a non-violent way) and part of an ongoing process. I continue to make these objects parallel to other work, most recently alongside drawings on actual paper that I started in Nova Scotia last summer using charcoal from the forest fires.

**JK:**

"Extracting" as in drawing the sculpture out of the materials? I ask because this reminds me about your the idea of the "suspended potential of things..."

**KH:**

Yes, this is an idea that follows me around: seeking the suspended potential of things. Especially things that were once alive—and copper, which can become live. It is a kind of reverse alchemy, drawing out the nature of what is there rather than trying to melt it into gold. It's a less exploitative kind of extraction than mining; instead, it seeks an essence, specifically by detecting relationships between things, things with varied histories, and politely asking them to assemble themselves.

**JK:**

Where do your materials come from? I see wire and pennies and shells and wood, and I assume they're all found.

**KH:**

I am by nature a collector, which has become a complicated idea after being confronted by my mortality several times in past years. I especially try not to collect shells or rocks anymore since it

feels like stealing, but I have all of these things in boxes that keep colliding and starting conversations with each other. A jar of pennies that went out of circulation in 2013 has often tempted the torch in my studio since then. Before 1982, pennies were ninety-five percent copper and easy to melt, so I would pick out the copper ones and melt them as some kind of perverse catharsis. I had all these little piles of melted coins asking for my attention while we were hoarding toilet paper during the pandemic. I also considered the copper electrical wire I had collected over the years, which has literal “current” currency. Copper feels both like a grounding material and a soaring connector/communicator.

**JK:**

You describe your assembled objects as “activators,” which makes them sound like catalysts of some kind—like they have a kind of divining potential.

**KH:**

I do think maybe they are divining or locating some kind of truth for me...truth in possibility.

**Jennifer Krasinski** is a writer and cultural critic who frequently contributes to 4Columns, Artforum, Bookforum, the New Yorker (Goings On), and other publications. Her essays have been published in numerous books and catalogs including Reza Abdoh, Jill Johnston: The Disintegration of a Critic, and Hilton Als's Andy Warhol: The Series. Formerly a Senior Editor at Artforum, she also served as the magazine's Digital Editorial Director, launching their video series “Artists On Writers,” and “Under the Cover.” She was on faculty in the MA Art Writing department at the School of Visual Arts (2013–2021), and has taught at Art Center College of Design, New York University, Yale University, and elsewhere. She is the recipient of an Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant (2012), a Rauschenberg residency (2024), and is a 2023–24 MacDowell fellow. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

**Kara Hamilton** works in a variety of mediums: sculpture, drawing in two and three dimensions, and jewelry. She explores the agency of material using mostly found or discarded matter. With a background in visual art, design, and architecture, Hamilton's works live at the intersection of these disciplines, decontextualizing materials and forms in order to create new narratives.

Hamilton has exhibited nationally and internationally at spaces such as TOPS Gallery, Memphis; Salon 94, New York; Art Gallery of Ontario; Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art, Winnipeg; EFA Project Space, New York; Tate Liverpool, Liverpool; Aspen Museum, Aspen; Kunstverein Amsterdam, Amsterdam; Taut and Tame, Berlin; and the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. Hamilton is also the co-director of Kunstverein Toronto. She lives and works in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.



Kara Hamilton  
*Ca*, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.Hamilton0065



Kara Hamilton  
Co, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.Hamilton0067





Kara Hamilton  
*Fe*, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.Hamilton0072



Kara Hamilton  
*FI, 2021*  
Mixed media  
K.Hamilton0073



Kara Hamilton  
*Fr*, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.Hamilton0074



Kara Hamilton  
*Mt*, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.Hamilton0084





Kara Hamilton  
*Ni*, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.Hamilton0087



Kara Hamilton  
*Th*, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.Hamilton0096





Kara Hamilton  
*Ti*, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.Hamilton0097



Kara Hamilton  
*U*, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.H0105



Kara Hamilton  
Yb, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.H0106





Kara Hamilton  
*Bi*, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.H0107



Kara Hamilton  
Zn, 2021  
Mixed media  
K.H0108



Kara Hamilton  
*Ga*, 2024  
Mixed media  
K.H0110





Kara Hamilton  
*Pr*, 2024  
Mixed media  
K.H0111



Kara Hamilton  
W, 2024  
Mixed media  
K.H0112



Kara Hamilton  
Xe, 2024  
Mixed media  
K.H0113