



Kate Newby

WHO IS THIS SONG?

September 21 - November 9, 2024

Opening reception: Saturday September 21, 3-6pm

COOPER COLE is pleased to announce *WHO IS THIS SONG?*, the third solo exhibition by Kate Newby at the gallery. The following text by Natalie Power accompanies the exhibition.

The first time I meet Kate, she's disembarking from a minivan, fresh off the heels of a cross-country pilgrimage. She's carted her materials--boxes neatly crammed with ceramic and glass--from Texas to New York City, which is thick with late summer by now. But never mind August's swampy inertia. There's space to be dealt with.

First up is making rope. Lucky for us, Kate's been to this rodeo before. She wields an iron thing with a crank, some object akin to farm equipment. She braids string through it, stations me across the room, and gets to spinning the farm thing's arm. The strings bind and thicken between us. A rope is born.

This rope is then fed through glass, which we spend hours hoisting and lowering and pulling taut, midwifing the work into its precarious existence. All this while The Byrds play from a nearby speaker and the city goes from goldish to nighttime purple. The whole situation--glacial spider's web of twine and solid--is an exercise in sustained diligence and trust.

There's something doggedly meditative in it. Some great paradox at play, which I later learn to ascribe to all of Kate's work: painstaking care against resolute risk. Fullness and concavity, and then a renegotiation of the two, and then another and another. Miniaturism beside enormity. A measured fitfulness, an earnest curiosity driving the whole operation. A declaration that the work is never fully cooked, that it may be reincarnated several times over and then burst by the kiln's impartial fire and then surrendered, in shards, to the soil of her garden.



It's a process laden with action. There's the throwing and clawing and flattening of clay, boring fingerprints and burrows across imperfect swells. There's combing sidewalks for glass, mining conversations and situations for source material. There are resurrections from storage and merciless Texas elements, pieces excised and adapted across years. It's an ever-generative practice in daily observation and absorption--of excavation and persistence.

What these actions beget, ultimately, are objects of disarming relatability. Rocks like friends. Metamorphic bundles of color with discernible attitudes--asking to be cradled and shaken, or else left the hell alone. Decisively assertive things, though hardly smug. They humbly anchor space. They command more than what they are given.

Kate Newby (b. 1979, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand) creates site-responsive works that are inserted directly into exhibition spaces and surrounding areas. Newby creates handmade, crudely constructed sculptural interventions that simultaneously connect and contrast their environments. Drawing out both the physical and poetic qualities of materials (usually materials such as concrete, textiles, glass, and ceramics), her work explores whether situational context can be just as informative as materiality and content. Underpinning Newby's process is a performative ethos: she investigates the way material interventions made in response to a site's particular temporal, physical, and geographical conditions can be a means of transformation and intervention.

Kate Newby received her Doctorate of Fine Art in 2015 from the Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland. Recent institutional exhibitions include Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Tokyo, Japan; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Museum of New Zealand, Adam Art Gallery Te Pataka Toi, Wellington; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; The Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; 21st Biennale of Sydney; Sculpture Center, New York; Blaffer Art Museum, Houston. In 2012, she won the Walters Prize, New Zealand's largest contemporary art prize, and in 2019 Newby was awarded a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant. Kate has undertaken residencies at The Chinati Foundation, Artpace, Fogo Island, and the International Studio & Curatorial Program ISCP. Newby currently lives and works in Wilson County, USA.