

Shannon Bool

Villa Karma

23.5.–5.7.25

“My background is in painting, you could say that painting is my mother tongue. But at some point, over time, I became more interested in what a surface can tell you.”

– Shannon Bool

Dialogues between body, architecture and material are central aspects of Shannon Bool's work. The combination of high-tech and traditional production processes constructs paradoxical spaces of perception between the digital and analog worlds in her work. The result is a subtle deconstruction of body ideals and identity. Shannon Bool impressively and sovereignly reflects on how current and historical techniques “organize” the way we see ourselves and the world. “Almost all of my work takes place first digitally,” says Shannon Bool, who then combines the digital with analog mediums such as jacquard textile weaving, painting or ceramics.

The exhibition title Villa Karma refers to Adolf Loos' building of the same name in Clarens on Lake Geneva. The title playfully refers to the fact that modernity has become part of our DNA through the targeted construction of “spaces”, whether real or digital that become suspended in specific materialities. Loos' strict material translations of rationalist ideals paradoxically open spaces of emotion and intuition within his strict parameters of privacy and representation.

The tapestry Karma impressively combines the processes of photography and digital image generation with the “physical” production process of the highly technological Jacquard weaving method. The digitally generated motif is haptically realized in high and low relief, with a specific combination of bright white cotton threads juxtaposed by deep black silk that creates almost electrical contrasts. A metallic-looking mannequin is digitally superimposed into the center-stage master bathroom of Villa Karma, whose Roman-inspired design is dominated by dark brown marble and a bronze door studded with rivets. Loos, in his 1898 article „Plumbers,“ highlighted hygiene as a fundamental aspect of modernism, arguing that it was essential for bringing order and cleanliness to society.



Karma, 2025

jacquard tapestry with silk and embroidery

296 × 296 cm

The fetishized relationship to the body and its functions is underlined by the metallic mannequin who simultaneously enters the room and repels it through reflections. The bronze door with the polished, “lightning-like” veining of the marble creates a paradoxical physical experience between digital and real space, which to a certain extent “collapses” in the psychological space of the viewer.

The motif of I Beam is based on a photograph of the interior of Mies van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat, which he built in the 1920s for the Tugendhat couple in Brno, Czech Republic. Shannon Bool digitally replaced the polished column belonging to the original architecture with a dance pole, a cheeky, formal pun of the “I” beams that Mies van der Rohe used in his villas. Through re-contextualization, the dance pole is transformed into an elegant architectural element. The elaborately hand-embroidered re-coloring of the Tugendhat's original Persian carpets formally contrasts the technological jacquard weaving process and ultimately underlines the complexities of the different timelines of the villa, while simultaneously drawing the viewer into the present.

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Magnificent Borderline, 2024

jacquard tapestry with silk and embroidery

Version 2/2: 260 × 173 cm

The Magnificent Boderline tapestry is the fifth work in Shannon Bool's "Borderline" series, which she began in 2020. The motif is based on a digital computer collage of a photograph from the fashion house Jeanne Lanvin Exhibition at Palais Galliera in 2015 with an actual simulation of the new Chase Morgan building in Manhattan by Foster & Partners. The Chase Morgan building is on track to be completed this year and will be an "icon" of sustainable architecture of the future. Bools Tapestry features a complex combination of reflective and opaque surfaces. The original exhibition architecture of the Maison Lanvin is closely linked to the textile designs, creating a "labyrinth of seduction and identity". Albert Elbaz, the director of Lanvin, referred to this as a "whispering exhibition" between material, body and space. Bool inserted the futuristic architecture of Foster & Partners into the original figurines. Through the haptic weaving of the jacquard technique, she constructs a fusion of fictional and real space, body and time.



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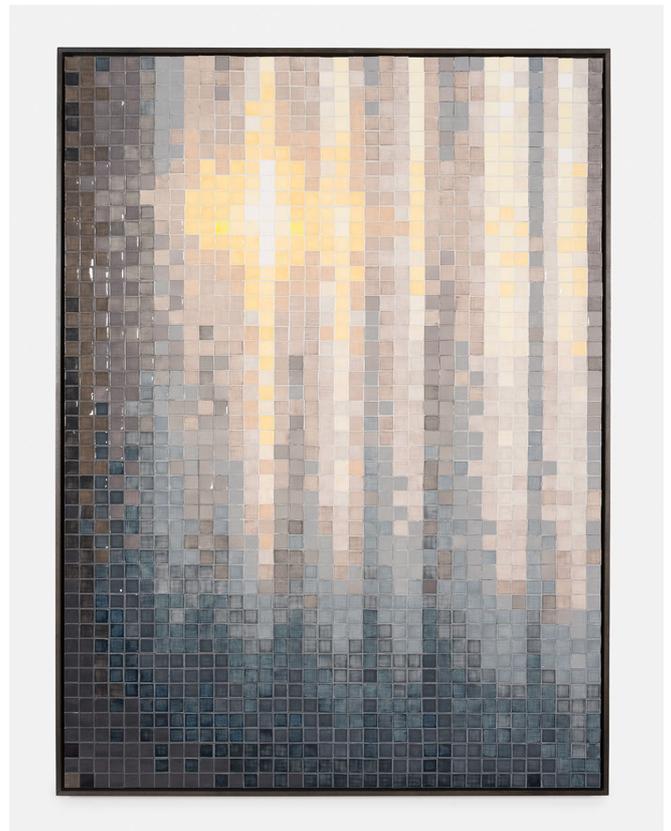
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Shannon Bool's Porcelain Tile Paintings appear abstract at first glance but are all based on digital photographs of curtains that she thematically links to views both too and from Loos' architecture. Hofburg Dämmerung refers to the view of Looshaus (Loos' iconic department store for Goldman & Salatsch) from Vienna's imperial palace, which was permanently obscured by curtains due to emperor Franz Joseph's hatred of its minimalist façade. View from Clarens and Sunset through Curtain are based on views from the Villa Karma in Montreux on Lake Geneva. Shannon Bool lends an impressive twist to modernity's desire for new perspectives to "see the world differently". Each motif from the Porcelain Tile Paintings is based on a digital photograph of a window view, which was reduced to a minimal number of pixels on the computer. Shannon Bool translated this digital abstraction into a meticulous spectrum of self-developed ceramic glazes, which she then brought into our real world "for eternity" by glazing, firing and assembling self-made porcelain tile "pixels" into a new reading of the digital image. High tech image generation and antique technology are combined to poetically reflect on ideas of time, visibility and technology. The technique of these Porcelain Tile Paintings has an impressive predecessor in Shannon Bool's major Kunst am Bau project, "Glass Curtain" for the new Cologne Opera House.

The more intimate formats of the Ceramic Paintings such as Mighty Machines, Cassiterite Formation or Indigo Skein playfully combine approaches ranging from Informal painting to constructivist views of modernism in their compositions. Each of the works use composition, color, and improvised formal language to define their own "space" between object and painting.

Shannon Bool's new series of Silk Paintings are based on the computer-deconstructed architecture of various modernist and so-called "brutalist" buildings. The compositions are "collaged" on the computer turning the functional architecture into an abstract pattern. Having cast off its "sacred transcendence" in this way, a tongue-in-cheek, savvy play with the "sacredness" of abstract art begins.



Sunset through Curtain, 2025

Glazed porcelain

142 x 104 cm

The grid structures are created as "blind paintings." The support is covered with wax and removed only after the painting process is over. It is semitransparent and conceals a mirror that subtly reflects the surroundings of the work. The actual space and body of the viewer become components of the work. Shannon Bool's conceptual painting originates in a precise work process that simultaneously involves the "unforeseeableness" of abstract painting.

Shannon Bool's series of Armored Nudes impressively furthers the interaction of body, identity and space. The intimate formats are unique and consist of superimposed photographs on Baryte paper and archival foil. The works are based on Shannon Bool's collection of postcards and photographs of female nudes in German sculpture between 1920 and 1940. Shannon Bool collages the idealized female bodies with fragmentary views of "hard" armored constructions, turning the female bodies into protagonists of futuristic narratives. "I am interested in the forms of these figures and how they cross into the spaces of modernism. (...) and transforming the women from passivity into futuristic protagonists."

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Galathea, 2025, Fine print with printed archival foil, painted magnets, 34,7 × 27 cm (framed), 16 × 11 cm (unframed)

Biographical Note:

Shannon Bool, born 1972 in Canada, lives and works in Germany since 2001. Currently her work is on view in the group exhibition “Skyscrapers by the Roots. Reflections on Late Modernism”, MAC – Musée d’art contemporain, Montréal, CA, “General Conditions”, The School | Jack Shainman Gallery, Kinderhook, NY, US and at “In anderen Händen. Highlights of the Philara Collection”, Miettinen Collection, Berlin. Her works are part of renowned museum collections such as Museum of Contemporary Photography Chicago, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Metropolitan Museum New York, Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt, Musée d’Art Contemporain de Montréal, Lenbachhaus Munich or The National Gallery of Canada. She currently produces a site specific art piece for the new building of the Opera in Cologne. Recent solo exhibitions were dedicated to her at the Kunstmuseum Krefeld, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago (both 2023), Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston (2020), the Kunstverein Braunschweig, Centre Culturel Canadien in Paris (both 2019) or Musée Joliette Canada (2018). She has participated at numerous internationally renowned group exhibitions such as „Räume Hautnah“,

Draiflessen Collection, Mettingen, DE (2024), “Infinite Regress: Mystical Abstraction from the Permanent Collection and Beyond”, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas and “Dreams of an Owl, Who the Bær and the Wounded Planet. Stories from the collection of the Kunsthalle Bielefeld and an intervention by Simon Fujiwara”, Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Bielefeld, DE, “Pop and Politics in Contemporary Textile Art”, Kunstmuseum Ravensburg & Kunstssammlungen Chemnitz (2022/21), „INTERTWINGLED – The Role of the Rug in Arts, Crafts and Design“, Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, „Dip in the past“, Lehnbachhaus, Munich (both 2022), „Now or Never“, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2021), „In the Picture: Over-painted Photography“ at Sprengel Museum Hannover, 2019, “Black and White and Everything In Between: A Monochrome Journey”, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, CA (2024), „Le Grand Balcon“ La Biennale de Montréal or „Im Herzen wild. Sammlung+“, Kunstmuseum Mülheim an der Ruhr (2024).

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