

Sympathy Ribbon
Margaret Crowley and Madeline Gallucci
September 20 - November 9, 2025

“I am at this instant in a white void awaiting the next instant. Measuring time is just a working hypothesis. But whatever exists is perishable and this forces us to measure immutable and permanent time. It never began and never will end.” (Clarice Lispector, *Água Viva*)

Grunts Rare Books is pleased to present *Sympathy Ribbon*, a two-person exhibition featuring the work of Margaret Crowley and Madeline Gallucci. The exhibition considers the transitory and its relationship to what is fixed or permanent, bringing together two practices attentive to the fragile ways time, sentimentality, and recognition are held in form.

In her paintings, Gallucci performs an accumulation of dust and weather, often treating the surface as if standing behind it, like fingers on fogged glass. These reflective grounds register time and perception, holding the residue of what pollutes or passes across them. Onto this atmosphere Gallucci affixes trompe l’oeil strips of ‘tape,’ a framing device immediately referring to the everyday, to labor, or to the provisional act of masking in utility painting. Stripped and twisted across Gallucci’s surfaces, the frame’s dual nature comes forward: tape is both precious as a material and utterly ubiquitous as a symbol, discernible here by its color. In some works the tape begins to spell, or cast spells, acting as a device for language and abstraction. For example, a shadow appears above the text in *SPAT* (2025) as if a body looms or has just passed by it. The distinct impression of another recalls the first double, the self split into a shadow on the ground or in a watery mirrored reflection.

These echoes of presence, temporary and insistent, find a counterpart in Crowley’s sculptures where memory and loss, or a blend of them called devotion, are formalized in fixed or enduring objects. Occupying the center of the floor is *50 years of service* (2022), an enlarged replica of a watch given to her grandfather by the International Union of Operating Engineers. The gift, meant to honor a lifetime of labor, is commemorative yet alarmingly slight, collapsing decades into a single object designed to keep time. What is meant to stand for permanence instead exposes its own instability and slips under the weight of what it is tasked to hold. Crowley’s scale shift, mûché in postmortem paperwork, marks and exaggerates the imbalance while also operating as an act of loving, allowing Crowley to commemorate better. Similarly, *Husband* (2025) is a token of loss; such sympathy ribbons typically adorn funeral arrangements so guests can easily identify the sender of each bouquet. Considered here as a found spool, the ribbon strings mourning into ritual and extends the given language beyond its set occasion.

Both practices beg how remembrance might be translated into form, and how fragile these forms may be. Gallucci and Crowley create works that measure: tokens of debris, labor, love, or grief. In their work, time and attachment play against the edge of memorial. The two suggest that the things we make to measure, to honor, or to keep ultimately disclose the impossibility of holding experience, or a synthesis of time, intact.

Bookstore:

Madeline Gallucci
Self-Titled (Sympathy Ribbon), 2025
Oil on canvas
22 x 30 inches

Margaret Crowley
Untitled, 2024
Cast aluminum
5 x 3 x 5 inches

Gallery (counter clockwise from windows):

Margaret Crowley
Husband, 2025
One bolt of white sympathy ribbon with gold text
6 feet, 4 inches

Madeline Gallucci
Termination, 2025
Oil on canvas
22 x 30 inches

Madeline Gallucci
Cornucopia, 2025
Oil on canvas
22 x 30 inches

Madeline Gallucci
SPAT, 2025
Oil on canvas
22 x 30 inches

Madeline Gallucci
Small Empire, 2025
Oil on canvas
22 x 30 inches

Margaret Crowley
MOMWOW, 2025
Greeting cards and paper mache
6 x 4 inches

Margaret Crowley
50 years of service, 2022
Postmortem essential paperwork, prayer cards, gold and silver leaf
50 inch diameter, dimensions variable

Margaret Crowley
Monstrance 1, 2025
Hair salon foil and paper mache
8 x 8 inches

Madeline Gallucci
Small Spell, 2025
Oil on canvas
18 x 24 inches

Madeline Gallucci
Hearts and initials, 2025
Oil on canvas
18 x 24 inches

