

Miriam Laura Leonardi

Oh, là, là, Cookies

Nov 16 - Dec 22, 2018

Oh, là, là, Cookies is Miriam Laura Leonardi's first solo exhibition in the United States. Cookies, those small pieces of data websites send to the user's computer that collect bits of information or remember browsing activity, are stray text files whose significance changes when taken out of context.

In 1919 (some say 1921), Marcel Duchamp shaves a five-pointed star on the back of his head and has his friend Man Ray photograph him, a year prior to the appearance of his alter-ego, Rrose Sélavy. In 2002, Carol Rama makes *Tonsure (Omaggio a Marcel Duchamp)*, a mixed media work on paper in which Duchamp's tonsure pattern is interpreted as a meteor shower. In 2018, Miriam Laura Leonardi transforms Rama's drawing into the sculpture *Tonsure Nuova*, turning the original hairstyle into a hair accessory.

The same year Rama makes her drawing, Lawrence Weiner makes the video *Deep Blue Sky / Light Blue Sky* in which a pillow is used as a prop, juxtaposed with a wooden penis. The pillow is only partly visible in Weiner's video: it is triangular in shape and sports a triangular logo. On camera, one of the words on its design is illegible. In 2015, Leonardi remakes the pillow for *GIRLS, FIRE, WATER*, imagining the missing word to be "water" (the original logo is the insignia of Camp Fire Girls, a youth organization). This is followed by several animated videos in 2016, in which the logo appears as different signs, including a tattoo and a road sign. In 2018, Leonardi has one hundred embroidered iron-on patches of the logo made, and places them in a box affixed to a wall. The work is called *GIRLS, FIRE, WATER (Patches)*.

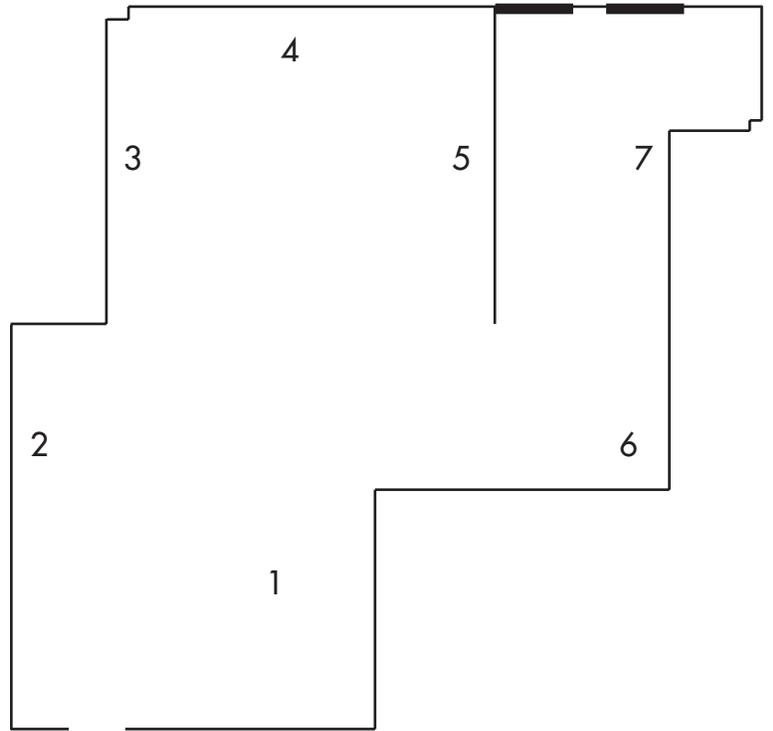
Both the patches and the headbands originate as signs with specific intentions, and by passing through art history, morph into merchandise: they are objects of fetish and peer-recognition, that could be taken out of the field of art and worn, thus propagating information. Although they are not readymades per se, and although they are built upon layers of authorship, these works possess a prototypical quality indicative of shifting statuses and effectivity as objects.

The three untitled paintings are also appropriational works: earlier this year, while in a bar in Rome, Leonardi saw a series of small amateur paintings by a local female artist. Now, she enlarges them to fit a contemporary art gallery. Made with spray paint and resin, contemporary art materials par excellence (if not a little has-been), they show floating letters refusing to convey clear significance. (They might recall the experience of trying to decipher the license plate of your Uber as it pulls up in the Los Angeles smog, smoke.)

On a mobile whiteboard, line drawings of shapes resembling the infinity symbol are affixed in a grid. Titled *art peanuts*, the work showcases pastel studies of a wool yarn drawn from real life, and this observational process is shared: the result of the activity of studying and learning to make art is presented on an object used for teaching. Where is the first thread in the yarn? Learning has neither beginning nor end, transmitting information is both the process and its product. The artist is forever trapped: within her process, within art history, within the flow of signs that circulate. Nevertheless, the artist was present: *Made*, a lone souvenir snow-globe of Los Angeles, bought locally and painted monochromatically by Leonardi, testifies to the artist having been here.

This exhibition was made possible with the help of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

Miriam Laura Leonardi (b. 1985, Lörrach, Germany) lives and works in Zürich. Recent solo exhibitions include Fri-Art, Kunsthalle Fribourg (Fribourg, Switzerland), Galerie Maria Bernheim (Zürich), Marbriers 4 (Geneva), Plymouth Rock (Zürich). Recent group exhibitions include Helmhaus (Zürich), Shivers Only (Paris), Istituto Svizzero (Rome), Swiss Institute (New York), Kunsthaus Glarus (Glarus, Switzerland), Schloss (Oslo), Astrup Fearnley Museum (Oslo), Paramount Ranch (Los Angeles), among others.



- 1 *Tonsure Nuova*, 2018
12 headbands, plexiglass, acrylic paint
- 2 *GIRLS, FIRE, WATER (Patches)*, 2018
100 embroidered iron-on patches, cardboard box
- 3 *Untitled 1*, 2018
acrylic and resin on canvas
- 4 *Untitled 2*, 2018
acrylic and resin on canvas
- 5 *Untitled 3*, 2018
acrylic and resin on canvas
- 6 *art peanuts*, 2018
oil pastel on paper, whiteboard
- 7 *Made*, 2018
snow-globe, acrylic paint