

via a. stradella 1

jessica stockholder

what is normal

PRESS RELEASE

may 20 – august 2021

Drawing is the protagonist and common thread between the three solo shows by Silvia Bächli, Jessica Stockholder, and Allyson Strafella on view at Galleria Raffaella Cortese from May 20, 2021. Each artist has developed their own drawing practice differently, but with the shared desire to cross the boundaries of the sheet of paper and overcome the limits of the frame and of the two-dimensional surface. The medium, in all three exhibitions, takes on an installative dimension and expresses a desire for osmosis with the space it inhabits.

As Germano Celant has suggested, Jessica Stockholder's works "can also be interpreted as a structural grid that rejects boundaries—between material and chromatic, rigid and soft, artisanal and industrial—, feeding instead on their free geography and relying on the passage from one to the other".¹ The American/Canadian artist, leader of her generation, has always deconstructed and redefined the boundaries between artistic disciplines—sculpture, painting, drawing, collage—by assembling everyday objects—furniture, chairs, carpets, kitchen tools, building materials—which she then coheres often by using bright, acid and luminous colors, which are not obedient to the contours of the objects. Stockholder's works bring to bear a unique understanding of the rules of composition, color and form, which together reinvent themselves using a synesthesia and creating symbiosis between matter and color. The objects and materials simultaneously lose their intrinsic functionality and at the same time mined for the multiplicity of meanings that they contain.

In the exhibition *Cut a rug a round square*, which Stockholder curated in 2021 for the OGR – Officine Grandi Riparazioni in Turin, she brought this same close examination of how objects, form, and convention come together to create meaning in relation to exhibition design, and to her selection of works from the Collection of Contemporary Art "la Caixa", Barcelona and the Fondazione per l'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea CRT.

This selection of *Corona Virus homeworks* works produced during 2020, a year defined by dramatic shifts in the time and space of production, is presented in via Stradella 1. At the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic Stockholder was unable to access her studio and developed a way of working that was possible from her home as is indicated by their title. Taking paper as a starting point, and working with the volumes that paper allows, these works were made by folding, sewing, gluing, and cutting, enacted on a variety of materials: paper, fabric, markers, pencils, threads, tulle, boot laces, and more. The works hang on walls in pictorial space, and yet they claim a sculptural dimension. This duality between picture making and sculptural form is consistent throughout Stockholder's work.

¹ Celant, Germano. "Installations in Symbiosis: Jessica Stockholder." *Jessica Stockholder – Revised and Expanded Edition*, by Lynne Tillman, Barry Schwabsky, Lynne Cooke, Germano Celant, Phaidon Press, 2018.

Holding hardware (2021) is also installed on the wall. The steel skeleton-like structure is bolted to the wall while blue and orange ropes stretch out to the floor, to the adjacent wall, and to the ceiling, while also infiltrating the space of a closet that is usually inaccessible and hidden from sight. The closet now emptied of its objects, and no longer functioning as a closet, is filled with a painted shape that it fails to contain. *Holding hardware* is related to Stockholder's *Assists*, a recent series of sculptural works which can't stand up on their own and must be strapped to some kind of a prop, a piece of furniture, a car, a lawn mower... anything that will serve to keep the sculpture upright. This dependence that is foregrounded by the *Assists* is analogous to the need that conventional paintings have for the support provided by the walls they hang on. *Holding hardware* is hungry for the space around it, and does not exist without its various forms of attachment.

The works in this exhibition continue to explore questions of edge, boundary, dependence and autonomy, which have been the focus of Stockholder's work over time.

BIOGRAPHY

Jessica Stockholder was born in Seattle in 1959. She lives and works in Chicago.

Stockholder is one of the most influential artists working today in the United States. She works with accumulations of mundane materials (furniture, chairs, fabrics, kitchen tools, plastic boxes, lamps). Using paint and color together with objects from the world, her art transforms the viewer's attention to perception, creating circumstance for familiar space and objects to be seen with fresh eyes. The altered relationship between objects, combined and her unusual sense of color are orchestrated within a pictorial framework. The work generates various moods and carries forth an abstract sort of narrative that can be understood as analogous to the flow of sound over time in music. Within this structure, and making use of the illusionistic space generated by the painting's surface, Stockholder's work allows for the experience of fantasy and fiction.

Stockholder's work has been exhibited in major American and European museums including: Centre Pompidou, Paris (2021); OGR – Officine Grandi Riparazioni, Turin (2021); Centraal Museum, Utrecht (2019); The Contemporary Austin (2018); Art Basel | Parcours (2018); Fundación Barrié, Vigo (2012); Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Saint-Étienne Métropole (2012); The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield (2011); Palacio de Cristal, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2010); Denver Art Center (2009); Vancouver Art Gallery (2006); GAM Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Turin (2006); Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2004); Chelsea Art Museum, New York (2003); BAC – Baltic Art Center, Visby (2003); CAPC – Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux (2003); Kunstverein St.Gallen (2001); Dia Center for the Arts, New York (1995); Fundación "La Caixa", Barcelona (1995); Kunsthalle Zurich (1992).