

HYPERALLERGIC

ART

The Sensory Tethers You'll Find in Textiles

Woven Walls, a tightly curated summer show at Morgan Lehman Gallery, explores a language between the threads of different textiles.

Seph Rodney July 15, 2019



Installation view of *Woven Walls* at Morgan Lehman gallery (all installation views courtesy Morgan Lehman gallery)

Sometimes I walk into an exhibition and language starts to sing in my head, when it's so tightly curated that I go ping-pong from one piece to the next, each one raising the ante for the collective pot of surprise. I had this experience with the [Woven Walls](#) exhibition at [Morgan Lehman Gallery](#). Many summer shows consist of a selection of disparate room-temperature art brought together because the artists have some relationship with the gallery, but here this show is cohesive, generally connected through the use of textiles, though textiles aren't the only material in use.

I came to the show by invitation of the artist [Tamara Kostianovsky](#), who I've written about before and whose work has impressed me with its ingenuity and its honest elegance. Here she's departed from the previous body of work, the one I was familiar with. That work consisted of scrappy, feral bird carcasses fashioned from old,

repurposed clothing. Kostianovsky is still using the reclaimed clothing, but has moved onto devising tree stumps that viewed from above, contains whorls of fabric arranged in radiating circles like the growth rings in a tree. However, the colors are bright pastels that bring to mind swirls of sherbet ice cream or a playroom for toddlers. Though the color scheme is charmingly juvenile, the wale of the corduroy material and the occasionally visible waistband suspend “Red Wood” between fairy-tale and ingenious recycling project. [Crystal Gregory](#) uses fabric as well, but her “Plunge” piece (2019) does precisely what it says on the tin. It’s nevertheless surprising. She has taken two large gray slabs of concrete and placed them on the wall with a wide swath of fabric shallowly embedded in each slab, but with a poetic fall of fabric between them so that the piece feels like an experiment in tension that has slipped its own hold and given in to what the poet [Jorie Graham](#) describes as “the slack and heaving argument of gravity.”

Carly Glovinski, “Day Off” (2018) (photo by the author for Hyperallergic)

The plunge is far more shallow in the hammock that [Carly Glovinski](#) has devised out of laser cut watercolor paper for “Day Off” (2018). What’s lovely about the piece is the way it is earnestly casual. The lines that should connect the hammock to its supports are drawn with chalk and connected to it by way of white-headed thumbtacks embedded in the wall; the thumbtacks actually do the work of keeping the sling aloft while the chalk lines tell me that the thing really exists only in fantasy. Lastly, there is [Elana Herzog](#)’s “Untitled” (2019) which mixes metal staples, fabric fragments, her own wallpaper, and a drywall

Installation view of *Woven Walls* at Morgan Lehman Gallery

substructure. It's all tattered and torn like the wall itself is slowly inching toward oblivion. But the wall remembers the beautiful things that once adorned it while it slides into entropy.

I do wish that more galleries put the kind of thought and care into their summer shows that Morgan Lehman has demonstrated here. *Woven Walls* is wildly inventive and keeps the voices individual while also being coherent in its explorations of what textile can say.

Crystal Gregory, "Plunge" (2019) (photo by the author)

Elana Herzog, "Untitled" (2019) (photo by the author)

[Woven Walls continues at Morgan Lehman Gallery](#) (526 West 26th Street, Suite 419, Chelsea, Manhattan) through July 19.

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