



Togetherness and Oneness
at Williamsburg Art & Historical Center, Brooklyn, NY
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Bringing together activism and reflection, [Leslie Horan Simon's](#) *Bird's Eye* (2019), positioned in the middle of the entrance-facing wall, is a careful arrangement of geometric felted wool that, to my eye, evokes Mondrian's *Pier and Ocean* (1915).

Much like the Mondrian work, *Bird's Eye* uses small geometric motifs congregated around a middle, creating a cross-like structure. This similarity struck me especially given the history of Mondrian's piece. Mondrian was traveling when World War I began, displacing him from the inspirational ambiance of Parisian life and confining him to the Netherlands. One can imagine the frustration at the disruption, yet the privilege inherent in not suffering on the front lines of battle. From this remarkable situation emerged the simple outlines of a grid-like structure capable of enmeshing any image, even that of cresting waves.

Simon's *Bird's Eye* has a very different background: Simon, seeking to raise awareness about endangered species, selects carefully sourced wool fibers for her works. The use of this Mondrian-esque motif, superimposed against battles of the present—commercial farming and wildlife preservation, in relation to the sheep—entangles different lines of thinking. There is simple joy to be had in looking at a pier and the ocean, in the juxtaposition of warm hues of brown and gray felt, and the repetitive patterns of both artwork and subject are intoxicating temptations. But behind the surface, there is work to be done.

History repeats itself, a comforting thought when waiting for dawn at the end of lockdown—but perhaps after the transition we can include several much-needed variations to the cycle. The disruption of the pandemic, in many ways, upset modes of thinking that were long-overdue for an overhaul. The works displayed from the Foundation's Permanent Collection teach us to be grateful for what has been brought to the surface, and for the strong will of artists willing to speak out.