



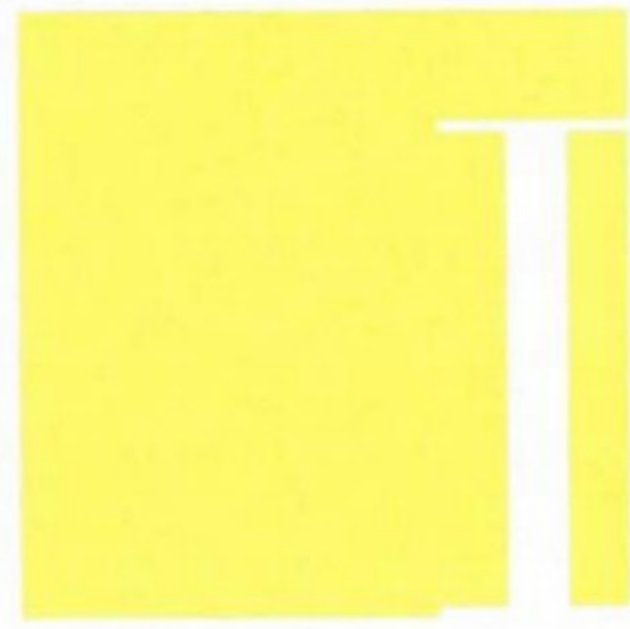
A New Day

JULIA COUZENS

RICHARD HOBLOCK

FARZAD KOHAN

May 15 through June 26, 2021



t's A New Day

with thanks to Nina Simone...

BY CAROLE ANN KLONARIDES

Reconsideration, repurposing, recalibration, call it what you like, for artists Julia Couzens, Richard Hoblock, and Farzad Kohan, it is an ongoing process. Layering, marking, moving the paint (the eye never rests), weaving, wrapping, scraping (the hand keeps active), a cyclical loop of rediscovery. An inspiration, perhaps, is to reconstruct a new consciousness from the salvage of our yesterdays. Sometimes the old is reinvented yet the roots remain, and new growth appears, and as clichéd as it sounds, a new day begins.

... Dragonfly out in the sun, you know what I mean, don't you know?

Butterflies all havin' fun, you know what I mean

Sleep in peace when day is done, that's what I mean

And this old world is a new world

And a bold world, for me ...



Sweet, 2011, mixed wire, rope, yarn, thread, plastic, 34 x 28 x 23 inches

As she approached the Little Flower Café in Pasadena, **Julia Couzens** eyed and then scooped up a doggie toggle pull toy left behind, a tight bundle of many colored strings that actually resembled some of her own sculptures. "Oh, this is so perfect for what I am working on!", she exclaimed to me as she quickly stuffed it into her bag, a catchall for similar urban detritus she finds as she walks about. Her sculptures, which she calls "bundles," are obsessively wrapped asymmetrical masses of rope, wire, string, yarn, bungee cord, fabric, and plastic, that have a textural physicality that gives the expression "tightly wound" a whole new meaning. Gathering, twisting, weaving, sewing, tying, all make up the form. The resulting structure, in its solidity with an occasional sharp angle, seems architectural, but is actually derived from a long history of drawing from the model or nature. Each sculpture begins like a drawing, starting with a line and continues until the intuited end with an aim to visually and physically build up layer after layer of contained energy. Like the Japanese *tsutsumi* ("wrapping"), used as protection for precious temple objects, one wonders if something worth protecting is contained within the sculpture's inner core, but the contents (if there are any) are safely secured and hidden.

In making the bundles, process and materiality is something Couzens privileges over the conceptual. Whether conscious or not, her work counters the historical patriarchy of monumental sculpture. Sculptors Eva Hesse and Jackie Winsor, process and materials artists a generation before, offered a more organic approach in comparison to the minimal and conceptual work of Donald Judd and Robert Morris, whereas Couzens' work is closer aligned to the work of Michelle Segre and Shinique Smith. Replacing the chisel with a needle, and casting with weaving, each work has a sculptural monumentality that comes out of craft traditions. They are light of weight, and if I were to wax poetic, I could see them strapped on the body as one's total belongings carried on a nomadic sojourn. The use of color is as a force, one different from contemporary sculpture primarily made of wood, stone, and metal, with a simultaneity of color combinations that express the ineffable.

Given a rotation of 360 degrees, each side of the sculpture provides a new vantage point with a new face. There is no totality or instant read, they operate in the space like alien forms whose origins one can't quite define and are so self-contained that they seem natural on the floor, hung from the ceiling, or protruding from a wall. It is the bringing together of these repurposed and disparate materials tightly bound in all their brilliant splendor that sends off a charge like a bundle of electrical circuitry ready to combust.

To paraphrase Couzens from a recent online response to our times, "Art's nature is exploratory, peripheral to linear progress and predetermined order. I think its meaning sprouts from the cracks in life." A bundle titled, Sweet, has a long shoot of bright green yarn that escaped and at its end is hanging a smaller bundle as if to say from the entanglements we make, there is always the possibility of something new thriving from the mess.