

For Immediate Release
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MATERIAL WITNESS
December 5, 2025 – January 25, 2026

McKenzie Fine Art is pleased to announce *Material Witness*, a group exhibition guest curated by Lesley Heller. The exhibition opens with a reception for the artists on Friday, December 5, 2025 from 6 to 8 p.m. and continues through Sunday, January 25, 2026.

The exhibition features the work of fifteen artists: **Ben Godward, Alexandra Kohl, James Lecce, Christina Massey, Dana Melamed, Cyrilla Mozenter, Ellie Murphy, James Nelson, Helen O’Leary, Jim Osman, Ursula Morley Price, Cordy Ryman, Pete Schulte, Drew Shiflett, and John Torreano.**

Material Witness explores each artist’s deep investigation of a particular medium. The paintings, sculptures, textiles, graphic and multi-media works in the show explore the interplay between materials and methods, reflecting each artist’s shared sensibility of inspiration, devotion, curiosity and engagement with the physical properties of their chosen materials. There is an extensive variety of materials, including aluminum cans, horsehair, dried cactus, urethane resin, yarn, felt, woven paper, graphite, pigment, acrylic polymer, clay, egg tempera, and wood, all offering unique possibilities for articulating ideas, emotions, meaning and context.

Projecting from the wall, Ben Godward’s sculpture of translucent vibrantly colored cast urethane shimmers with reflected and refracted light. Drawing inspiration from the strength, grace, and healing spirit of horses, Alexandra Kohl hand-places strands of horsehair into forms that juxtapose stillness and movement, precision and imperfection, and the geometric and organic. Richly vivid and glossy paintings by James Lecce feature flowing organic shapes of poured, layered, and pooled acrylic polymer emulsion. Exploring the emotional landscape of climate change, Christina Massey transforms repurposed beer cans into highly articulated hanging sculptures. Dana Melamed uses dried chola cactus as the source material for burning and carving three-dimensional, simultaneously rugged and fragile architectural worlds. Cyrilla Mozenter hand cuts industrial wool felt melded with silk thread to create wall hangings that hover between two and three dimensions, art and poetry. Ellie Murphy braids brightly colored acrylic yarn into cascading textiles that reference doll hair, crafts, folk motifs, and Americana. In James Nelson’s finely wrought graphite drawings, abstract organic forms emerge from their grounds of fibrous Chinese paper. Helen O’Leary bandages together discarded wood fragments to fashion dimensional substrates for her egg tempera paintings. Jim Osman uses cut sections of wood and house paint to create intricately balanced, architectonic sculptures. Ursula Morley Price, employing a traditional pinch-and-coil method, achieves the delicacy of paper in her fluted stoneware clay vessels. Fusing painting and sculpture, Cordy Ryman creates abstract geometric works fashioned from humble materials such as acrylic paint and wood. In Pete Schulte’s nuanced drawings, graphite and pigment are used to create precisely defined shapes and spaces referencing both geometric and organic forms. Drew Shiflett weaves small pieces of paper layered with gouache and graphite to make reductive yet complex ethereal compositions. Inspired by the Webb and Hubble telescopic images of outer space, John Torreano embeds faux faceted gems into wood to convey stars, planets, and the universe.

Lesley Heller established her first gallery, The Work Space, thirty years ago in Soho as a non-commercial, curatorial venue presenting thematic group exhibitions. After ten years she moved to the Upper East Side, reopening as Lesley Heller Gallery, presenting salon-style solo exhibitions. Combining the two approaches, in 2010 she moved to the Lower East Side as Lesley Heller Workspace. After closing the gallery in 2020, Heller has continued working as an independent curator, art consultant, and artist career coach.

Gallery hours are Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, Sundays, noon to 5, and by appointment. The galley will be closed over the holidays from December 24, 2025 through January 2, 2026.