

Crinkle and Drape

Jenny Brillhart and Frances Trombly in PULSE Conversations
Pulse Miami Beach Contemporary Art Fair
Booth S-100
December 1 – 5, 2015

At PULSE Miami Beach this December, Emerson Dorsch will present new works by Jenny Brillhart and Frances Trombly. The booth will be part of a new section of the fair, called PULSE Conversations for curated booths featuring work by two artists. Trombly's large-scale installation, called *Over and Under* (2013), will be exhibited at PULSE as well, as part of PULSE Positions.

In their tone and attention Brillhart's subtle studies of sky and studio connect with Trombly's spare explorations of fabric, labor, and acceptance. Jenny Brillhart is truly a studio artist, in that her work represents the studio where it is made. She spends time in her studio painting and also making and moving walls, forming arrangements and organizing. She creates compositions from pieces of drywall, wood and old artworks that move around the studio. She paints or photographs these temporary set-ups, then moves again between layers of photography and paint until another object feels found.

"When in the studio I find hints, or moments of significance, within working procedures. Ideas come with the process and are a direct result of being in motion with something already started. It is best to keep a consistent practice so that things continue to grow, refine, dissolve and so on. Physically, I am photographing, cropping, cutting, mixing color, painting, gluing, sanding, cropping, standing, sitting, and always observing light."

The paintings tend to pick up the palette of her space – grey concrete and white walls, with the occasional blush of color. The works depict process as much as place. They read as architectural still lives, especially in their focus on the resonance of material in the arrangement. Jenny's new work at PULSE Miami Beach puts her materials in place outside, and the still life realized inside the studio now resembles a gently sloped vista against sky. Indeed, it seems that the distance between still life and landscape is as much in the mind as in space. Ask her and she can tell you which piece ended up as the crumpled piece of paper in *Foam and Copy Paper*. The materials and places she names in her titles are even more important. The facts and functions of these objects/places, and their names and service to the process, become an alchemic ingredient list to the work. She pays attention to procedure, personal limitations, and on the substance of things. Aesthetic is always the by-product, not the initial impulse. As with Brillhart, Frances Trombly's work arrives as a result of the shifts in her process, her focus and her attitude. She is honing in on her vision, for the work to be about itself, rather than a representation of another thing. She states, "In the past works, there was more of an effort on my end to control the material.

Now, there is an acceptance. An acceptance of the grid and sagging that happens with the material. I embrace the drapes and pulls, dents and scars that develop as I work instead of creating perfection.” The aesthetic is the result, and the beauty, when it happens, is the space between.

In her new work, Frances has highlighted these spaces by painstakingly embroidering a section of fabric. She weaves color into and onto canvas fabric she has woven herself. The hand-dyed silk and the stitch she uses, called the running stitch, emphasizes the importance of the area she highlights. In all those hours, days and years of weaving she noticed the grain of the fabric, the way it responds to stress and the way it reflects her own time and labor. This is the intimacy of her draped canvases, for they are not paintings. While they refer to paintings, they are pieces of fabric, with their own intrinsic properties, drape and gesture. Trombly’s embroidery allows us to see what she sees, a fold here, or the way the fabric rests on the floor there. It does look different at rest than when it is hanging.

A larger context for Frances Trombly’s work starts with the acknowledgement of a literary and historical association of fiber with women’s work. Since her watershed series *Paintings*, made in 2009 and 2010, she has found several ways emphasize the value of labor. The body of work for this show consisted of handwoven canvas mounted on stretchers of various sizes, but none wider than the width of the loom. In these works she allowed the irregularities in her cloth to show, for on the bare canvas the only thing to notice was the fact that the fabric was handmade, not machine made. Framing her handwork in this way made her thesis very clear. Fabric is as much an art form as painting, so much that it can be painting. From this point Trombly began to focus on different properties of the fabric itself, from its versatility to its drape.

Like weaving, the concept of drapery begs historical associations, and in sculpture these associations are almost always with the human body. They are also gendered – think of Bernini’s *David* as opposed to women’s drapery – think of fashion, curtains and interior design. Frances’ new work has aspects of both. The fall of the fabric suggests its innate life. On the other hand, she is so intimate with the material that she knows how to touch it to make it fold in just the right way. Here there is sensuality and gentleness and ... style.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Jenny Brillhart has exhibited at the Frost Museum of Science, Miami, FL; Frost Museum of Art, Miami, FL; Pascal Hall, Rockport, ME; *Dimensions Variable*, Miami, FL; *FRINGE*, Miami; *Sammlung SØR Rusche zu Gast im Museum* in Germany; *Perez Art Museum Miami*; *The Naples Museum of Art*, Naples, FL; the *Anhaltinischen Gemäldegalerie Museum* in Dessau; *Roemerapotheke Gallery* in Zurich. Selected private collections include Joachim Schloesser, Joan Blackman and Dawn Adels Fine. Her work has been pictured in *The New York Times* and

the Miami Herald, and her work was reviewed in the Miami Rail. Frances Trombly has exhibited at Transformer at American University, Washington, DC; Prosjektrom Normanns, Stavanger, Norway; Locust Projects, Miami, FL; The Abrons Art Center, New York, NY; The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT; the Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, FL; Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia, PA; and Socrates Sculpture Park, New York. Her work is represented in the public collections of Pérez Art Museum Miami, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami, FL, and the University of Maine, Museum of Art, Bangor, ME. Selected private collections include Jorge Pérez, Paul and Estelle Berg, Francie Bishop-Good and David Horvitz, and the Ruth and Marvin Sackner Collection. She runs a nationally recognized alternative art space called Dimensions Variable with her husband Leyden Rodriguez-Casanova. Her bibliography includes pieces in the Miami Herald, Sculpture Magazine, El Nuevo Herald, Miami New Times, the Los Angeles Times, and The New York Times. A catalog of her watershed series Paintings, shown at Girls' Club Collection in Fort Lauderdale, was published in 2011.