

sculpture

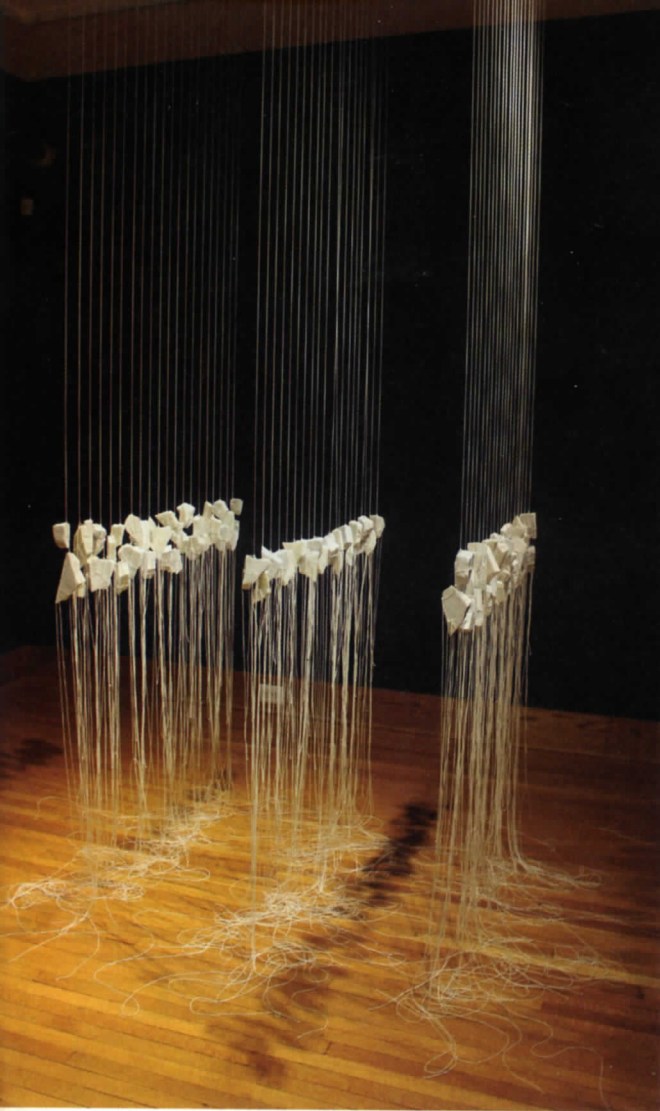
may/june/2019
vol.38/no3

A PUBLICATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SCULPTURE CENTER
WWW.SCULPTURE.ORG

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\$9.50US/CAN
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NEW YORK

Petah Coyne

Galerie Lelong & Co.

Petah Coyne's recent solo show in New York, after too long an absence, clearly demonstrated that she has lost none of her visual and narrative verve. More *nature morte* than "still life," her dramatic sculptures and installations share the ethos of mementos and votive offerings—haunted and hushed by mortality. The 11 works in "Having Gone I Will Return," most of them completed recently, feature entire consignments of treasures, vintage and new, belonging to the artist and to others. Their material abundance includes tree branches, feathers, ribbons, fabric, religious figurines, candles, bell jars, and haughty, tiara-crested, stuffed peacocks of azure and iridescent green or pure white (their tails as resplendent as any royal

wedding train), as well as chicken wire and industrial gadgets. Coyne's covetable silk blooms are in countless evidence, dipped in snow-white, blood-red, or black wax. These colors thread through the works like a kind of litany, conjuring fairy and folk tales associated with purity, beauty, love, life, and death. One exquisite, small-scale work, dedicated to the Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector, consists of a white camellia-like flower bedded in red velvet and enshrined under clear glass, like a relic in a reliquary. Most of these works are named after writings by authors ranging from Joan Didion and Joyce Carol Oates to Bruno Schulz, Yukio Mishima, and Kenzaburo Oe.

Coyne, who was raised Catholic, suffuses her

LEFT TO RIGHT:

PERLA KRAUZE
Horizontal Installation,
2018.

Stones with gold leaf and yellow resin and oil on canvas, each painting: 8 x 8 in.; 18 x 71 in. overall.

BARBARA LIOTTA
Chorus,
2011.

Mixed media,
installation view.

PETAH COYNE
Untitled #1289 (The Year of Magical Thinking),
2008–17.

Silk/rayon velvet, batting, felt, thread, wood, chicken-wire fencing, wire, screws, washers, hanging brackets, and Oz clips, 33.5 x 66 x 17 in.

once rooted in the sensual exploration of stone and a need for order. While aspects of Land Art and Minimalism inspire both artists, Krauze engages viscerally with the land and the materiality of stone, traveling to the border to gather shards. Liotta, a former dancer, emphasizes the performative potential of the material and its uses in Greco-Roman classicism and the groundbreaking work of Richard Long and Andy Goldsworthy.

A psychodrama of role-playing and selfreenactment emerged

from their exhibition. "A Dark and Scandalous Rockfall" not only became a metaphor for the reprehensible violence at the border, but also held out the possibility of healing, not least through the example of collaboration. Boldly mining the immaterial force of the physical world, Krauze and Liotta revealed how space becomes place when viewers experience an invented landscape, deciphering its textural nuances and topographical variations, and intuiting the force of its soul.

—SARAH TANGUY



VIEWS

aesthetic with ritualistic echoes and a sumptuous theater of contrition, longing, melancholy, and mourning that recalls the pageantry of Counter Reformation dogmatic imagery. A *fin-de-siècle* ambience also permeates her work, more evident than ever with the inclusion of infinite yards of lush velvets. Wax and velvet both evoke the enclosed, hothouse interiors of the late Victorian period, when death called early and with less restraint, when the departed were mourned with sumptuous material accompaniment and remembered through

intimate, sometimes macabre keepsakes. Coyne's material splendor imaginatively triumphs over morbidity, an achievement not dissimilar to the metamorphosis of the material into the spiritual undergirding Catholicism.

Three white-framed, open screens marked an entrance of sorts into the main gallery, beckoning like the enchanted portals that everyone knows you enter at your own peril—and all the more alluring for that. Covered in bare branches, clambering white and red blossoms, and a pair of snowy geese, *Untitled #1388 (The Unconsoled)* (2013–14) reinforces Coyne's recurrent theme of loss with its reference to Kazuo Ishiguro's enigmatic novel.

The astonishing *Untitled #1379 (The Doctor's Wife)* (1997–2018), the most ambitious work in terms of scale and intricacies of fabrication, required more than 20 years to complete. Coyne's aesthetic demands labor-intensive, fastidiously handmade methods, but her processes also pay tribute to women worldwide who have labored unconscionably long hours (and still do) over such materials with no recognition and little recompense. Two cloaked figures inhabit this landscape of ruched, undulant dark velvet embellished with waxed flowers, which extends for almost 16 feet (an elevated platform offered viewers a bird's-eye view). The saturated, overripe beauty and almost oppressive atmosphere were inspired by Sawako Ariyoshi's celebrated 1966 novel,

which recounts the bitter rivalry between a daughter-in-law and her husband's mother, both competing for the love of the mother's son. Coyne is deeply concerned with this kind of jealousy, a destructive obsession that poisons women's lives and keeps them in thrall to the strictures of patriarchal society.

Her smaller sculptures are equally charged and equally flamboyant, maybe even more so due to their potent concentration. Several suspended, chandelier-like works stood out here, including *Untitled #1375 (No Reason Except Love: Portrait of a Marriage)* (2011–12), a study in black and white, *Untitled #1242 (Black Snow-*

flake) (2007–12), referring to (among other readings) the black rain created by the atomic fallout in Hiroshima, and *Untitled #1410 (Mishima's Spring Snow)* (2015–16), which creates a contrast of cool, spiraling whiteness.

"Having Gone I Will Return" perhaps offered Coyne's version of a memoir, although much of the story is elliptical and cached. Redolent with tenderness, it yokes grief to solace in a perpetual cycle. For Coyne, loss is redeemed by not only by love, but also by a furious love of art and art-making that is both acknowledgment of our mortality and its antidote.

—LILLY WEI

NEW YORK

Urs Fischer Gagosian

In Jacques Tati's genre-defying masterpiece *Playtime* (1967), Mr. Hulot, Tati's unwitting alter ego, drifts haphazardly through a stylized, ultramodern Paris, interacting with a host of inanimate objects brought to life through technology and camera work within a massive, specially constructed set known as "Tativille." Although the film is devoid of plot, characters, and dialogue, it follows a fluid choreography of chance, as Hulot and others engage, and are engaged by, the mechanical dance of the built environment that

surrounds them. In many ways, Urs Fischer's recent exhibition, "PLAY," with choreography by Madeline Hollander, picks up where Tati left off, but with a major upgrade in technology. Nine generic office chairs in varying colors moved freely on their own through Gagosian's cavernous 21st Street space, gliding and spinning effortlessly across the polished concrete floor. Their seemingly random movements coalesced into synchronicity at times, appearing keenly aware of, and also ambivalent about, the viewers around them.

