

DEREK ELLER GALLERY

JULIA BLAND & MICHELLE SEGRE

February 6 - March 8, 2020

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 6, 6-8pm

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present a two-person exhibition of new work by Julia Bland and Michelle Segre. Fiber is the commonality: yarn is wrapped, stretched, and intertwined over and around metallic structures in Segre's sculptures, while Bland's sewn, woven, burnt and dyed works exist somewhere between painting and three-dimensional tapestry.



Bland's abstract compositions are comprised of cut-up, stitched pieces of canvas and woven fabrics that she paints and hand-dyes. Working with scissors and a loom, her process consists of de-assembling and mending, often leaving space for ropes and intricate thread work, knotted and painted over. Light filters through, creating a sense of airiness that is counterbalanced by dense geometric patterning. Some works recall spiritual architecture and iconography, while others lean towards the anthropomorphic and the natural world, with oval and vessel-like structures undulating across the tactile surfaces. *Slow Cast* and *Moth*, featured in this exhibition, contain a strong sense of direction and light. They possess a formal gravity; triangular shapes within the works are heavy, yet pointing towards the sky. *Slow Cast* absorbs light evoking the darkening sky; while opaque *Moth* reflects light and conjures the dawn.

Michelle Segre's new works are mystical artifacts for the modern age. While she is known for her improvisational process, the under/over/under/over weaving technique is consistent; strict contours of yarn are counterbalanced by bright colors emanating from a center. Her sprawling piece on view in this exhibition, *Just why do you think you're a plant?* (a title inspired by the short story "Piper in the Woods" by Phillip K. Dick), contains a repurposed giant carrot made of beeswax, placed on the floor, sprouting a large metallic frame that climbs to the ceiling. Segre creates a maze-like composition, in which dry lotus roots, painted bread balls, star anise and dried purple carrots are entangled. Her lines, drawn with yarn, act like electrical currents, pulsating their way throughout space. *Star Zero*, the other large, eye-shaped sculpture catches the viewer in its net, radiating a powerful, positive force from the inside out.



Both Bland and Segre push us to reconsider modes of making fiber-based art. Bland's work employs the loom, while Segre tends to work without implements. For Segre, the forms start with a wire, from which she draws lines with yarn and incorporates organic, found objects. For Bland, the process always begins in a different place — at an edge or in the center — and moves forward intuitively with hand-stitching, painting, dying, or weaving. Both artists work extemporaneously, guided by their own self-imposed rules and internal visions.

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Julia Bland (b. 1986) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She will be included in the upcoming *Abstranded: Fiber and Abstraction in Contemporary Art* at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, NY, and was recently featured in *Even Thread Has a Speech* at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, WI. Bland has had solo exhibition at Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago and Helena Anrather, New York. She holds a BFA in Painting from the Rhode Island School of Design and a MFA in Painting and Printmaking from the Yale School of Art.

Michelle Segre (b. 1965) lives and works in New York, NY. She has had solo exhibitions at institutions such as the Cress Gallery of the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga and the University Art Museum at the University of Albany, SUNY. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park, KS; the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, CT; and MoMA PS1 in Long Island City, NY, among others. She has been honored with a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, a Civitella Ranieri Foundation Fellowship, the American Academy for the Arts and Letters Award, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Award. In 2019, Segre's work was included in the publication *100 Sculptors of Tomorrow* by Kurt Beers, published by Thames and Hudson, London. She will be included in the upcoming group exhibition *All of Them Witches* at Jeffrey Deitch in Los Angeles, and has curated *Cult of the Crimson Queen*, on view at Ceysson & Bénétière in New York.

Image captions:

Julia Bland, *Moth*, 2019, canvas, fabric dye, oil paint, linen threads, wool felt, wax, 104 x 64 inches

Michelle Segre, *Star Zero* (detail), 2020, yarn, metal, plastic-coated wire, thread, bread balls, plaster, acrylic, resin, lotus root, mylar, 108 x 64 x 8 inches