

CYRILLA MOZENTER
the failed utopian & Other Stories

April 21 - May 13, 2018

Opening reception: Saturday, April 21, 5:30 - 8pm

In *the failed utopian & Other Stories* Cyrilla Mozenter exhibits two and three-dimensional pieces of hand stitched industrial wool felt and works on and with paper. While the pieces have been selected from different bodies of work and from different periods of time, there is an essential correspondence between them.

Using deceptively simple, pictogram-like images along with letters and words, Mozenter has invented her own language. The work is in the tradition of iconic images. Cycladic idols, medieval tapestries, Fra Angelico's frescos, African divination figures, and Aboriginal cave painting are points of reference. The involvement, however, is not with a standardized symbolic system. Through an immersion in an intuitive and improvisational process, a personal symbolism, which has reverberations beyond the self is discovered and revealed.

the failed utopian series began with Mozenter's questioning the failed utopian vision of modernism and asking if failure can sometimes be met with enthusiasm. This series is represented here with a group of wall pieces of industrial wool felt— tapestry-like in their size and physicality. Cutout shapes are hand stitched into the felt ground. The artist considers them to be sculptures with a two-dimensional organization.

The boxy, freestanding felt pieces from the *warm snow* series hover in the space between drawing and sculpture, suggesting elemental architecture. *Cave*, 2009, for example, includes a pencil drawn polar bear. They are also hand stitched with silk thread. In these works the sewn seams serve as exoskeletons, enabling the otherwise floppy felt to stand up and support open, interior spaces. The stitching both provokes and resists felt's natural inclination to buckle, stretch, droop, and torque, bringing an element of chance and unexpected dimensionality. Both the stitches and the resulting dangling threads may be seen as concrete forms of mark making.

The six small-scale *Arctic Spring* pieces are at once drawing, sculpture, and collage. They are made of archival corrugated cardboard and paper in combination with such things as sunflower seeds, hazelnuts, and a cuttlebone. In these pieces, the determined, repetitive stitches of the felt work are replaced with a mummy-like layering of small strips of thin, translucent, white mending paper that also suggest snow. Like felt, snow is an insulator and makes quiet.

The four charcoal drawings included in this exhibition are from earlier in Mozenter's career. The artist considers them seminal. The energetic persistence of their every-which-way mark-making predicts the compressed chaos that is felt as well as the determined yet doomed attempts at regularity of the hand stitching.

In all the work there is a sense of immediacy of execution along with the gradual realization by the viewer of the time and labor required.

Cyrilla Mozenter's website: <http://cyrillamozen.com/>

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