

MEGAN COTTS

Proprius

April 7 - May 12, 2018

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 7th, 6-8pm

KLOWDEN MANN

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Megan Cotts
Untitled
2018

Tempera and ground glass on linen
38 by 44 inches

Klowden Mann is proud to present our second solo exhibition with Los Angeles-based artist Megan Cotts, *Proprius*. The exhibition features a series of sculptural paintings made of linen stretched over wood, painted with pigment formed from tempera and ground glass. The monochrome and dualchrome works are presented as individual tiles, and in groupings that form larger works on the gallery walls. The exhibition will be on view from April 7th through May 12th, 2018, with an opening reception on Saturday April 7th from 6-8pm.

Situated between painting and sculpture, the works in *Proprius* traverse the formal language of architectural minimalism, but are overtly bodily in a way that defies strict association with that language. The shapes and textural weight of the work seem to reference the cast concrete forms that skim buildings. At the same time, Cotts' process—building wooden structures in accordion or hexagonal forms, stretching wet linen taught over the wood, letting it dry, then applying pigment—leaves friction and imperfections that resists the imperviousness of concrete architecture, hinting at a very human physicality. It is difficult to miss the sense of internal structure becoming bone, the way the linen stretches like skin, and the tension of a surface tight with the breaking through of what lies underneath. Cotts allows the linen to rest somewhere between support and containment.

Conceptually and formally, the work plays with ideas of transience and permanence, movement and stillness. Each piece is created to hang in any orientation, direction, or configuration, allowing the works to act independently, but also function in service to the space in which they are presented. The space becomes as significant as their internal coherence, with the inherent flexibility in how each is hung and displayed allowing them to be phonemes, becoming full phrases depending on the context and setting.

Cotts discovered in her research for previous bodies of work that the accordion and hexagonal forms used in *Proprius* provide for the strongest and lightest structures. Whether used by bees in honeycomb or humans in flight, these are the most enduring shapes for motion. In bodies of work exhibited in Los Angeles and New York over the past four years, Cotts inscribed her own family's legacy as the originators of honeycomb technology patents in Germany in the early 20th century into her work. Creating two and three dimensional pieces informed by the shapes of the patents, and later by the punch-hole cards that were fed into hand-crank machines at her family's factory to indicate specific designs, Cotts' invoked her own history by reclaiming intellectual property that had been taken away from her family during the National Socialist uprising, and did so through a physical act of her own body.

If Cotts' previous bodies of work looked at personal family legacy reclaimed through an act of artistic summoning, these works seem to create a vision of a future legacy. When approaching the physicality of the works in *Proprius*, it is difficult not to see a strong reference to motherhood—both in the direct

physical relationship of stretching to accommodate a form within, but also in the power and containment evidenced by the works, and their formal flexibility; the shifting of self-definition and the boundaries eminently strong but already broken.

The paintings address the near-universal desire to build something, and accordingly it is no accident that the individual pieces most immediately call to mind the dual influences of the architectural and the maternal; the human desire to effect change and see the visible impact of our activity has long been seen as the surest way to forestal fear of our own mortality. On a fundamental level, both architectural feats and acts of progenation are about legacy and the defiance of time. Buildings are created with the hope that they will outlast us, and children are born with every hope that they will live beyond us and that we will have stretched the world to create more space in it in which they can exist. Cotts' *Proprius* creates a transcendent language of weight. It is a deep act of optimism by the artist to offer us works that reflect the weight and heft of legacy, but provide flexibility within that weight. The work is optimistic, but not utopian—this is a form that embraces individuation in the face of near perfection, and evidences Cotts' belief that weight and movement are not mutually exclusive.

Megan Cotts (b. 1979, New York, NY) received her MFA from California Institute of the Arts in 2009. She has exhibited her solo work at Klowden Mann, Dan Graham and Compact Space in Los Angeles, Junior Projects, False Flag, AIR Gallery, and New Release in New York, TSA in Brooklyn, I-A-M Gallery and Atelierhof Kreuzberg in Berlin, Germany, and SIA Gallery in Sheffield, England. She has participated in the Terra Summer Residency in Giverny, France, the Vermont Studio Center, the GlogauAIR Artist in Residence Program in Berlin, Germany and the I-A-M Artist in Residence Program in Berlin, Germany. Cotts has also performed and exhibited with D3 at Machine Project and Human Resources in Los Angeles, CCS Gallery at UC Santa Barbara, and Central Trak Gallery in Dallas. She is represented by Klowden Mann in Los Angeles.