

Transmutations

Jessica Drenk

September 12 - October 17, 2020

Returning for her first solo exhibition with Galleri Urbane since 2017, Jessica Drenk presents a highly-anticipated range of sculptural artworks in *Transmutations*. The exhibition is the gallery's largest solo show of the year, situated across both of its front exhibition spaces. Known and sought after for her compelling transformations that make use of common materials like books, pencils, and PVC pipes, Drenk's newest body of work continues to push the boundaries of her creative practice. The artist utilizes a number of new methods and materials that are being exhibited for the first time, furthering her fascinating ability to blur the boundary between the man-made and the natural.

Drenk's practice is a dedicated investigation into materials. Employing a process-based approach, the artist sets out to cultivate the hidden potential within numerous commonplace, often-overlooked objects. "If it can be torn, cut, hardened, or softened, these are processes I will try," states Drenk. The result of these processes is a range of complex objects that harken to formations found in nature. Drenk's long-standing use of books as a raw material continues in *Transmutations*, revisiting select previous series and introducing new ones. On view is the largest *Cerebral Mapping* work yet to be displayed at Galleri Urbane: an 11-foot-tall weaving network of wax-covered book spines. Drenk's new *Compression* series reimagines the same materials in a contained, densely-arranged manner that is most dramatically displayed in a trio of 7-foot-tall panels. The artist's *Circulation* works are also revisited. Book pages are arranged in concentric layers that mimic a cross section of a tree trunk, positing an object that nods to the raw material's original source.

Fascinating additions to the artists oeuvre are also found in the exhibition. Scrap pieces of plywood are repurposed and altered through intricate relief carving in the *Countour* series, impressively transforming the humble material. Q-tips coated in plaster branch out in crystal-like formations found in the sprawling floor installation *Dendrite*. Stacked, compressed, and carved junk mail take on the layered appearance of tectonic formations in various *Aggregate* works. Our brief interaction with the disposable medium is ultimately contrasted with the geologic time scale of rock formations in these intricate wall sculptures that beckon for closer inspection.

Including previously established and new bodies of work alike, *Transmutations* is unquestionably attributed to Jessica Drenk's well-established artistic vision. The exhibition, however, demonstrates the artist's ability to expand on her techniques and ideas in an innovative manner that continues to surprise her audience.

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Jessica Drenk has an MFA in 3D Art from the University of Arizona and a bachelor's degree from Pomona College where she was an art major. Drenk has been the recipient of several awards, including an Artist Project Grant from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, and the International Sculpture Center's Outstanding Student Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award. Her work has been pictured in *Sculpture*, *Interior Design*, and *Curve* magazines, as well as *The Workshop Guide to Ceramics*. Her work can be found in numerous private and public collections including Fidelity, Yale University Art Gallery, TCU's School of Education, and UT Southwestern Medical Center. A working artist since 2007, Drenk's home and studio are near Rochester, New York.