

Jessica Drenk
On Edge
Oct 7 - Nov.11, 2023
Public Opening Reception Oct. 7, from 4:00-7:00 p.m

GALLERI URBANE

Galleri Urbane is pleased to announce *On Edge*, an exhibition of artwork by Jessica Drenk. This represents the fifth solo exhibition by the artist at Galleri Urbane.

A first look never sounds the depths of an oeuvre by Drenk. The artist is fed by her fascination with natural patterns. During hikes—at times to the same canyon in the American Southwest—she lets nature imprint upon her its myriad shapes and systems of order. The result is a delicate and encyclopedic attention to the vast possibilities of form as meticulously created and perceived.

Each found and repurposed material is a cipher that highlights its physical properties while transmuting them. In this show, based around the line and the edge, Drenk continues her work with book pages in *Sheaf*. Drenk lays out clumps of pages, nails them together, saws them, and nails them together again in an iterative process of separating and gathering again. Wax liberates fresh translucencies, like water over stones. “I also love the idea of these words, thoughts, and stories being completely disrupted and reshaped into something that is now read aesthetically,” she says. Compressed and rhythmic, expansive in scale, her work is an exercise in shapeshifting.

With the new *Aggregate* series, strata shot through with the colors of junk mail, the viewer is brought into rapport with geological time and its opposite (“the momentary glimpse versus eons”), but also the time of human labor—the layering of time in her own craftsmanship, like the rocks and ridges forged in the crucible of the earth. Meanwhile, “Color is the indicator that you should get closer,” she says. Instinct suggests the surface is not what it seems. Opposites and extremes, the macro and the micro, naturing and denaturing come into play.

While Drenk often returns to materials time and again, her practice allows for both depth and breadth in material investigation. Her 2020 show brought Q-tip cotton swabs to new levels (this installation was recently featured at the NADA x Foreland fair in New York) and this exhibition brings a new material: tape. As with all of her work, “Some things end up looking like a magnified version of something else,” Drenk says. But mimicry or verisimilitude are only incidental. The point is to invite the viewer to reconsider. “My goal is to take a material as far away from itself as possible while still retaining the ability to tell what it is,” she says. The viewer is left with a visual (even ontological) quandary that invites closer looking. Drenk activates human curiosity as an aesthetic tool for liberation: she wants us to simply see—and see anew.



Aggregate: Strata 2
Junk mail, cardboard, used paper
58" x 86 x 2.5"



Sheaf 1
Book pages, wax
74" x 138" x 4"



Jessica Drenk has an MFA in 3D Art from the University of Arizona and a BA from Pomona College. Awards include an Artist Project Grant from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, and the International Sculpture Center. 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. Drenk's home and studio are near Rochester, New York.