

REGEN PROJECTS

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REVIEWS

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Andrea Zittel

ANDREA ROSEN GALLERY

Andrea Zittel's exhibition "single strand, forward motion" followed two major surveys of her work: "Critical Space," which toured the US and Canada in 2006 and 2007, and a retrospective of works on paper at Schaulager in Basel in 2008. Perhaps her slate felt clean. Or perhaps, since her home in Joshua Tree, California, aka A-Z West, has been a tourist destination and test site for about seven years now, she wanted to shift her terms; she might also be tracking an economically influenced curve away from high-finish collectibles toward faster, lighter experiments. In any case, this show was more abstract than we've come to expect from the social engineer of discipline pods and utility modules. Handmade and meditative rather than industrially fabricated and psychospiritually hygienic, Zittel's new work addresses problems of extension, accumulation, and turning—which might mean rotations in space, decisions in time, or changes in mood and discourse.

The walls were painted halfway up in dark gray-green. Above, below, and across the ragged edge of this rolled-on wainscoting hung eight framed works that make use of lines and overlay—call them drawings. In neat rows between the frames hung 136 unique cast-bronze hooks. Looped on some were strands of crocheted black wool, while a fall of ivory strands hung on one wall. Here and there dangled other oddments—a crocheted pouch and a misshapen cone resembling a stocking cap, both in ivory wool; bunches of dried tea bags; two pairs of battered scissors with red thread tied to their handles; a bouquet of what looked like pinecones dipped in pale green paint. Diagonally across the floor snaked a single black crocheted cord.

Two of the framed "drawings" really were ink on paper: freehand studies of squares and rectangles. The rest were panels—woven from gray, black, and ivory wool and with variously shaped holes—secured to backings of muslin, burlap, or plywood. One looked like a sky; craper, another like a leaf. Others brought to mind floor plans, or fabric from which the pieces of a pattern had been cut. Each was clearly a systematic accretion of some kind. But the metrics governing production were not transparent, notwithstanding titles like *Set B: Instructions for Walking Patterns with 900 and 1800 Rotations (Ivory)*, 2009, and *Single Strand Shapes: Forward Motion with Variable Rotations (Charcoal Grey with Black Edges and Appendages)*, 2008. Heretical though it sounds regarding Zittel, the actual rules mattered less than their visual products. One could feel a counter-

geometric, bodily impulse transmitted through the otherwise strict lines, both drawn and woven, and in the hooks, which had been hand molded in wax before being cast in bronze. The irregular regularity of daily tasks was figured, too, in the pileup of tea bags, and in the arrangement of the woolen skeins, which seemed to have been hung wherever it was handy, neatly but without preciousness.



view of "Andrea Zittel", 2009

Zittel calls her hooks "Vertical Accumulators: Digits," and has spoken of crocheting as a "physical processing of distance." This means, I think, that a more or less pure measuring of repetition through acts of hanging up, taking down, counting, touching, turning, and returning—motivates her. This emerged especially on opening night and the following afternoon, when a team of the artist's students walked patterns based on the number sets that guided the crocheting. Activating the master code with their own movement, the quartet, through their low-res "dance," brought the enigmatic, static artifacts into real-time relation with the audience; it's a pity the performance didn't recur throughout the exhibition. Zittel is always courting purity, but she's not usually so relaxed about it.

-Frances Richard

APRIL 2009 185