

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

STITCHED

524 W 26 Street, New York
January 14 – February 19, 2022

Titled after a paper and thread collage by Veronica Ryan, *Stitched* is a group exhibition of works that are sewn, threaded, and interwoven. Expanding the definition of stitching from the literal to its most conceptual interpretation, the show will present textiles alongside woven glass, knotted plastic, and printed thread. Artists in the exhibition include: Tauba Auerbach, Sanford Biggers, Alighiero e Boetti, Bruce Conner, Lucky DeBellevue, Claudette Gacuti, Zoe Leonard, Eric. N. Mack, Christian Marclay, Claes Oldenburg, Veronica Ryan, Joel Shapiro, Alan Shields, Rosemarie Trockel and Kelley Walker.

In **Veronica Ryan's** titular collage, sterilized medical pads are connected with neat, short, black stitches to form a grid of delicate cross hatches, providing formal elegance to material detritus. Sewing to renew and repair, Ryan stitches lines that emphasize and underline, drawing attention to their own meandering journey as much as the unexpected objects they enclose and conceal. **Zoe Leonard's** *Strange Fruit* embody a similarly restorative impulse, reconstructing empty fruit skins with thread in a futile act of preservation. As the fruit decays and turns dull, the materiality of the colored thread comes to the fore. Like Leonard's fruit, sewn in part to distract the hands and let the mind wander, **Joel Shapiro's** sailboat sketched with needle and pale-pink thread forces the hand to draw slowly what might otherwise be achieved with great speed. A contemplative slowness is particularly apt for this intimate drawing marked '31' – the artist's age at the time of its making.

In the work of **Eric N. Mack** and **Sanford Biggers**, found cloth gestures to a broad material culture and the specific stitches of past makers. While Biggers imbues new life into the handiwork of unnamed quilters, Mack indiscriminately combines fabrics with origins as disparate as far-flung factories or high fashion ateliers. In both cases, stitches old and new interweave to create multigenerational fabric collages. An elegant example of **Claes Oldenburg's** soft sculpture, *Soft Doors for Airflow Model #5*, 1965, uses stitched fabric as transformational tool, making the familiar strange through unexpected textures and corporal forms. An enlarged sewing needle by **Claudette Gacuti** similarly employs the magnification of quotidian objects through the malformation of this elemental instrument for repair. Also working with canvas but to diverse effect, the highly decorative and multicolored work of **Alan Shields** sings with vibrant energy, and shines with glitter and beads. Working across large-scale stitched paintings, suspended sculpture, and poetry, Shields's work exudes sensual theatricality.

In the 1950s, **Bruce Conner** began making elaborate engraving collages in which fragments of nineteenth-century prints coalesce in surreal, hallucinatory worlds. In 2003, he reproduced a selection of these as tapestries on a Jacquard loom, thereby transforming the unique works into another form of nineteenth-century reproduction. **Christian Marclay** also stitches on a monumental scale, interweaving hundreds of cassette tapes with plastic zip ties to create a continuous loop of potential sound. Despite the mass-produced materials, each stitch is threaded by hand. In *M-Maille (S)* and other small sculptures, **Tauba Auerbach** enlarges the rigid stitches found in chainmaille through curled and interlocked rods of glass. In these and drawings based on knit structures, Auerbach celebrates the stitch as technical innovation.

For more information, images, and artist biographies please visit www.paulacoopergallery.com