

# PAULA COOPER GALLERY

JANE BENSON  
243A Worth Ave, Palm Beach  
January 29 – March 5, 2022

Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of recent work by multidisciplinary artist Jane Benson. Working across sculpture, sound, drawing, and printmaking, Benson is known for interventions into existing works of art, literature, and found objects.

The works on display are investigations into the contemporary resonances of texts by British suffragette Mona Caird and Enlightenment philosopher Holbach (who wrote under the pseudonym Mirabaud). In both cases, Benson dismantles and reconstructs the literary works by excising syllables of the musical scale—do, re, mi, fa, soh, la, ti—to reveal a found score embedded within. In a further step, Benson translates the excavated scores into geometric color field prints based on Isaac Newton's similarly arbitrary Color Spectrum. Layers of dots in various hues create a delicate moiré effect that visually embodies the revolutionary texts.

*The Pioneer of Civilisation*, *A Defence of the Wild Women* and *The End of the Patriarchal System* are the titles of essays in Mona Caird's collection of writings on women's suffrage published in 1892. Benson's works of the same name excavate Caird's texts, presenting either hand-written reproductions of the pages with sections cut out, or the excised text in combination with its audio-visual color field interpretation. Hung side by side, the scores and the abstractions invite the viewer to join in the act of translation, while slowing down the act of perception to create space and time for reflection. The nonsensical system is, to Benson, an accurate reflection of the enduring prevalence of the patriarchal system.

In her *System of Nature (Reflection)* series, Benson has applied the same technique to Holbach's philosophical work. Benson read *System of Nature* (1770) during the pandemic lockdown and was struck by the relevance of Holbach's writing on humankind's alienation from nature. Selecting relevant passages, the artist applied her systematic intervention to produce a musical score from the text, which she used both as a literal score to make sound, and to create color field prints. In contrast to the earlier series, these new prints are displayed independently from their textual referent as succinct abstractions that gently curve away from the wall to form sculptural reliefs.

**Jane Benson** (b. 1973, Thornbury, UK) received her BFA from Edinburgh College of Art and her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is a Fulbright Scholarship recipient. In 2018, The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, presented Benson's first institutional survey, *Half Truths*, which coincided with the publication of *Jane Benson: A Place for Infinite Tuning* (Skira, 2018). Other one-person exhibitions have taken place at the Boca Raton Museum of Art, Florida; LMAK Gallery/Keijzers Konig, New York; Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York; Henry Street Settlement: Abrons Arts Center, New York and Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York. Benson has also exhibited at MoMA PS1, New York; SculptureCenter, New York; Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany; Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; the San Jose Museum of Art; Kunsthalle Emdem, Germany. Benson lives and works in New York, and is currently a resident with the Sharpe-Welentas Studio Program.