

...might be good

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Mystic Truths & Offbeat Revelations

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Anna Craycroft

Tracy Williams, Ltd., New York

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by Sarah Demeuse

A pattern often has a negative connotation: we use the term when we see someone falling back into a destructive behavior, or when we discover the mathematical backbone of something we'd found to be mesmerizingly beautiful at first sight. In the last few years, patterns, and clashing ones at that, have certainly made their way back to the catwalk. Over the last year, Anna Craycroft has approached the topic of patterns as natural, aesthetic and social phenomena as an omnivorous researcher. In her current exhibition at Tracy Williams, she presents us with proof of, as well as the beauty within, the human draw to pattern. For Craycroft, patterns are less an epiphenomenon than they are an essential tool; an operation necessary to acquire our uniquely idiosyncratic habits.

Though a pattern implies copies or copy-ability (it is, etymologically, the original meant for copying), there is little repetition at Tracy Williams. Four wall-mounted brightly colored rope-works attached in the corners of the main gallery space represent three distinct crystal structures (Flourite, Scheelite, Anatase, Andalucite). We're inclined to see beautiful larger-than-life structures that echo the fancier playground. Walking underneath the Scheelite structure, we enter into a reading room, dimmed by geometrically patterned silk window screens. The oversized rope arrangements remind one of the physical strength needed to install the work and contrast starkly with the original referent (the mineral) as well as with the more intimate and cerebral activity preserved for the other parts of the exhibit.

The jump from whole to part, and from collective to individual, provides the push pull in this show. This need to connect the universal to the particular also rings through in the exhibition where abstraction in the main room is contrasted with a potential for specificity in the side gallery. Here, two child-sized pieces of furniture recall the vibrant color and line of the ropes, and give the visitor an opportunity to peruse Craycroft's image archive and research notes that have been distilled into a 5-part bookset titled *Developing Patterns of Learning*. It is here that we see and read about the multiple ways in which human learning, intimacy, habit, movement and behavior all depend on repetition, imitation or mimicking. The books' size, font, material and the emphasis on images and simple sentences bring us into the world of pedagogical kindergarten books. Though *Drawn to Repeating Patterns* certainly lets us rejoice in the aesthetics of childhood while preserving the allure of the archive, at bottom it invites us to explore, in a seemingly pre-institutional and pre-disciplinary, though hardly naive or uninformed way, some crucial elements of reality that shape our own lives.

Sarah Demeuse reads, translates, edits, writes and makes exhibitions. Together with Manuela Moscoso, she founded rivet, a curatorial office that currently focuses on object-oriented approaches in philosophy and contemporary art.