



Lorri Ott
stray



Cover:
*all the ways I tried to stay
(blister)*, 2013
resin, pigments, plastic bags,
found wood, 23 x 16.5 x 2.5 in.

Above, top:
seeker, 2013
resin, pigments, plastic bag,
linen, 7 x 22 x 3.5 in.

Above:
stray, 2013
resin, pigments, linen,
plastic bag, found wood,
12 x 5 x 3.5 in.

Opposite page:
oddball, 2013
resin, pigments, linen,
10 x 8 in.



A New Freedom

Lorri Ott makes deceptively informal-looking objects using a short list of materials, including urethane resin, liquid pigments, plastic bags, linen, and sometimes foil, coffee, and cigarette ash. Ott uses these as her working vocabulary, landmarks of process in the course of very savvy, art theory-inflected experiments which are, by their nature, part of a series. *stray*, on the other hand, which is both the title of a recent piece and of her current show, is a word that emphasizes not only the overt scruffiness, but also a feeling they convey of individual isolation, quirkiness, abandonment, independence, and ultimately a kind of aesthetic freedom. A slow and attentive, case-by-case reading of Ott's visual essays is rewarded with a wealth of sensuous associations. Each operates in its own hard-won space, revealing secret connections and subtle physical rhymes.

Asymmetrical and disheveled, the 12-inch tall *stray* presses a tight stack of flotsam against a weathered strip of wood. It seems, perhaps, like a sort of flag, crushed as if under the weight of unendurable indifference; or like a creased relief map charting emotional hills and valleys. The stick, the flag pole, is its spine, the impetus for abrupt changes in texture and color, for a sense of direction and movement. It's also all that's left of the stretchers, which the rags of linen and uncoiling threads, the drips of pigment and puddles of glaze raggedly recall. Such traces indicate that *stray* is the unraveling of a traditional, four-cornered painting (what after all is a flag but a painting stretched on three sides by the wind?).

The works are hybrids that combine painting and sculptural intentions in about equal measure. These hybrids explore feminist-oriented territory between paint and textiles, making reference both to the distended, puddling fabric installations of contemporary Austin artist Katy Heinlein, and Richard Tuttle's 1970s-era non-hierarchical improvisations. They're all about the way that energies and forms combine against corners and edges, clenching and compacting. They seem frozen just in the moment between spasm and extension, like muscles in a systolic phase of functioning.

Each of the striped works uses the confines of a small stretched linen rectangle to re-enact an opposite, expanding, diastolic movement. Here the references and inspirations include New York post-minimalist painter Mary Heilmann, whose well-known 2005 work *Surfing on Acid* consists of wobbly stripes of color. Her more recent, closely related stripe paintings like *Acid Splash* (2012) continue to combine late modernist formal preoccupations with a quasi-psychedelic, highly personal account of sensual response. Ott also adds another layer of art historical reference as she recalls Arte Povera founder Lucio Fontana, whose elegantly slit canvases



opened up a new kind of space with a bold, assassin-like signature movement. Ott's striped pieces *oddball* and *redeye* stretch pigmented resin across a gaping hole in the center of small linen canvases. *mirror, mirror* goes even further in this direction, recalling the cave-like structures in Lee Bontecou's shaped canvases. The pigment and resin salve almost heals or hides the wound, but not entirely, functioning either as a bandage or a scab, stained with the memory of art, of art history and all the endless human effort that transforms materials into metaphor, into autobiography. The muscle tears loose between the bones, the heart breaks loose from its rhythm, and the painting is a bridge between breath and breath, a dressing for emptiness.

—Douglas Max Utter

Lorri Ott

Born 1963, Cleveland, Ohio
Resides in Cleveland, Ohio, and Brooklyn, NY

lorriott.net

Education

- 2004 MFA in Painting, summa cum laude,
Kent State University, OH
- 1996 BFA in Painting, magna cum laude,
University of North Carolina

Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 *not a new life but a nod*, Kingston Gallery, Boston MA
- 2011 *passive voices*, MOCA Cleveland, Cleveland OH
something quiet, William Busta Gallery, Cleveland OH
- 2009 *debris from a lost campaign*, William Busta Gallery,
Cleveland OH
- 2006 *at a distance from the real, exit* (a gallery space),
Cleveland OH
- 2004 *MFA Thesis Exhibition*, School of Art Gallery, Kent State
University, Kent OH

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2013 *The Edge and a Little Beyond*, Soil, Seattle WA
American Painting Today, Physical and Visceral, Krasi Art
Center, St. Joseph MI
CONstructions/conSTRUCT: The Organizing Principle,
Clark University, Worcester MA
Pouquoi Pas (Why Not), Le Pont-de-Claix, France
No Longer Presidents by Prophets, Delicious Spectacle,
Washington DC
Crush the Serpent, The Tea Factory, Brooklyn NY
- 2011 *Surface Tension*, Kun Gallery, The Ohio State University
(Marion), OH
Faction, Artstreet, University of Dayton, Dayton OH
Thereby Bare, Zeitgeist Gallery, Nashville TN
- 2010 *VSC AIR Exhibition*, Vermont Studio Center, Johnson VT
- 2009 *8-Hour Projects*, Allegheny College, Meadville PA
Flash Forward, SPACES, Cleveland OH
- 2008 *Rockford Midwestern*, Rockford Art Museum, IL
*Description Without a Place: Ivelisse Jimenez and
Lorri Ott, exit* (a gallery space), Cleveland OH
- 2007 *Neo Abstraction*, AG Gallery, Brooklyn NY
*Noting the Overlooked: Sarah Kabot, Matthew Kolodziej
and Lorri Ott*, FAVA, Oberlin OH
Convergence, College of Wooster Art Museum, OH

Works on Paper, Flux Factory,
Long Island City NY

- 2005 *Materializing Form: Recent Work
by Nicole Havecost and Lorri Ott*,
Kenyon College, Gambier OH
*Structures of Experience:
A Response to Robert Smithson*,
Kent State University School
of Art Gallery, OH
- 2004 *A Temporary Arrangement*,
Cleveland Public Art, OH
Aviary, curated by Kristina
Newhouse with artists Alison
Foshee, Stas Orlovski and Alexis
Weidig, superior (an exhibition
space), Cleveland OH

Honors and Awards

- 2012 Nesnadny + Schwartz Visiting
Curator Program, MOCA
Cleveland, Cleveland OH
(Joao Ribas)
New American Paintings,
Boston: Open Studio Press.
- 2011 Tiffany Award Nomination
Nesnadny + Schwartz Visiting
Curator Program, MOCA
Cleveland (Mary Ceruti)
- 2010 Nesnadny + Schwartz Visiting
Curator Program, MOCA
Cleveland (Ian Berry)
Artist in Residence, Vermont
Studio Center, Johnson VT
- 2009 Artists Registry, White Columns,
New York NY
Artist in Residence, Ox-Bow,
Saugatuck MI
- 2006 Nesnadny + Schwartz Visiting
Curator Program, MOCA
Cleveland
- 2005 Visiting Artist, Kenyon College,
Gambier, OH
- 2004 Dedalus Foundation Fellowship
Finalist, New York, NY
- 1996 Grant Recipient, Liquitex
Excellence in the Arts Program,
University of North Carolina

Teaching

- 2006–
2013 Adjunct Faculty/Assistant
Professor, Cleveland Institute
of Art
- 2005–
2013 Adjunct Faculty/Assistant
Professor, School of Art,
Kent State University