

Poetic Action

In Aurora Passero's textiles there is an ongoing process of solving some of the primordial problems of art: motif versus image, form and format; colour, matter and texture; objects and their spatial surroundings. This process appears as monumental canvases in woven nylon, covering walls from floor to ceiling, or hanging as long strips, meandering like snakeskin over steel pipes hanging in different heights. In some cases the weaves are formed as small, intimate compositions where the material and visual play unfolds in a more compressed format. Passero's variations of the fabric and the operations of the weave are equal parts traditional craft and experiments with a standardised apparatus and procedure, and an exploration of whether the material surfaces can also carry meaning as pictorial statements and signs.

One interesting aspect of the loom as machine is that it is associated both with something pre-modern and with contemporary technology. Textile weaving is known from Neolithic times, and is in this respect one of our oldest crafts. Textile production would later be a driver of the industrial revolution, and the more than 200 year old punched card system of the Jacquard loom is practically the world's first computer. The complex machinery in these weaving constructions makes it possible to work across the entire surface at the same time, and opens the weave up as a pictorial activity in line with painting. This is also how we know certain textile art that has taken the leap from applied art to so-called "discursive practice", with Hannah Ryggen's political tableaus as the foremost example in modern Norwegian art history.

Passero's weavings are made with a plain weave on a horizontal floor loom, a method that doesn't provide the same opportunity for complex patterns or extensive image composition as the jacquard or vertical loom. The simplicity of the plain weave limits the material and visual repertoire. The aesthetic decisions are visible in the structure, as variations in the thickness of the nylon threads and the characteristic grid pattern of the weave, and openings or tears created by reckless, almost expressive gaps between the weft threads. Applying large abstract-expressionist colour fields to the textiles emphasises and accentuates the works' kinship with the painting - including, of course, the weave as the sister or brother of the canvas. The colour highlights the glossiness of the synthetic nylon, which is precisely this; a modern product that is all surface and without depth in tradition. The choice of material is given aesthetic, practical and discursive justifications that can be compared to the postmodern painter's affinity for cool and industrially manufactured bases made of plastics and metals such as aluminium, acrylic glass and tarpaulins, and that could act as a buffer against the historicised expression of the canvas.

Passero's weaves become works without secrets. What you see is what you get. The loose warps that hang like paint drips from the textile structure, is a gesture that demonstratively brings out the interior of the tool and the process. The technique is time consuming and elaborate as labour, but as aesthetic production it is effortless and direct.

Passero describes her work with the term "poetic action". The concept contains an ambivalence that corresponds with the contradictions within the works as lying between tradition and modernity, applied art and discursive practice, or between painting and sculpture. As Passero herself points out, any textile remains formless until it is mounted, as a painting on the wall or a sculpture in the space. Action can mean simply to act, work and struggle. The term opens up both for an ambition to take a place in an aesthetic hierarchy, and an understanding of the works as documentation of a process that is guided by both rational and intuitive decisions.

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