

# STEFAN STUX GALLERY

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## ORLY GENGER

*Installation*

January 11 – February 15, 2003

Some artists are so practiced in their chosen craft that they're quite capable of making their work in their sleep. For Orly Genger, who transforms knitting's simple homespun aesthetic from the soft-core realm of winter scarves, afghan sweaters, and cozy blankets into the hard-core realm of obdurate sculptural object, work becomes more than just a totalizing dusk til' dawn schedule; she literally spends every waking hour on her knitting, often drifting into sleep with piles of multi-colored yarn at her feet. To say that she is all obsession with zero direction, however, does a disservice to the highly resonant yet somehow sad-sack objects that she creates. Where artists as varied as Mike Kelley and Yayoi Kusama literally ride roughshod over the gallery, creating vast tapestries or littering the space with all manner of trippy optical dots in an effort to exhaust whatever compulsion possesses them, Genger brings a calm, deliberate serenity to her thick cables and viral offspring. Rather than the "one thing after another" serial repetition of first generation minimalism (always a good strategy for mindlessly filling up exhibition space) Genger "spawns" each labor intensive unit as a form of additive mass-making generally associated with all-weather, outdoor public monuments. Genger seems to think, without a hint of irony, that if Richard Serra, *The Man of Steel*, can make a sinuous, enveloping wall that stretches the limits of physical gravity (and existential fear) why not do the same in a staggered column of woven wool whose house of cards fragility is pointedly overcompensated for by its sheer weight.

While Serra is no doubt a master of the drawing, planning, engineering and implementation phases of his art, the results nevertheless smack of a kind of bureaucratic, managerial sublime. Genger's brain, on the other hand, seems hard-wired to deliver a top-down series of commands, yet her intuitive heart makes sure that the results never smack of the assembly line. At times these hive-like cellular clusters have the rubbernecking appeal and spontaneous randomness of a particularly nasty train wreck, at others, the careful arrangement and deliberation of a Japanese rock garden or topiary hedge. Additionally, Genger dispenses with knitting needles, weaving acres of lipstick red, hothouse fuschia, or powder blue yarn with her own quick and nimble fingers in order to compress the distance between ideation and implementation. The simpler the technique, the more streamlined the decision tree, the more direct the neural synapse, the more variation, ultimately, her work is able to generate. So when you see a drooping utility belt dangling from the wall like apparel from some alien DIY hardware store, or a hangman's noose, that could be the seasonal accessory for the loved (or hated) one that has everything, you'll know that it came from the same muscular mind that has little patience for clever critiques, post-feminist or otherwise.

*-David Hunt*

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