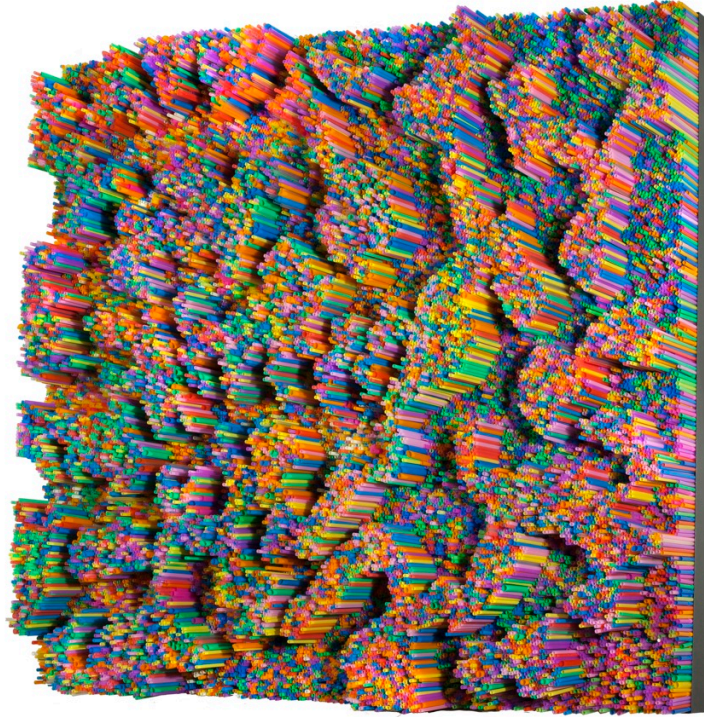


LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

FRANCESCA PASQUALI

MATERIAL ANATOMY

January 20, 2020 – March 12, 2020



Francesca Pasquali, *Straws, Straws*, 2016 Multicoloured Straws on Board, 130 x 150 x 22 cm

On view from January 20 to March 12, Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to present "Material Anatomy," Italian artist Francesca Pasquali's fourth exhibition with the gallery. In her wall reliefs and site specific installations, manufactured plastic materials such as straws and neoprene make up intricate sculptural structures, and prompt a dialogue with the region's unique and nuanced relationship to petrochemicals. Tightly bound or folded together, the often monochrome structures follow rhythmic configurations, recalling coral and microscopic anatomies. "Material Anatomy" presents several works across the artist's practice, including works from the Frappa series, playfully named after the iconic layered Italian pastry.

Rather than merely mimic the natural world, Pasquali's work is an ambivalent mediation on mass consumption, and strongly research-based. Paying tribute to the practices of Arte Povera, Pasquali reinterprets and engages with the mundane throwaway items that make up our everyday visual landscape. Often collected from landfills, the overwhelming quantities of accumulated single-use items speak to plastic's pervasive prevalence. Transforming banal objects into visual creations to be revered and preserved, the artist demonstrates that the throwaway is capable of new functions, as well as being physically sublime.

Beginning with basic, primordial compositions, such as a net, a metal cage or planks of wood, Pasquali develops each piece organically, "growing" these manmade structures through holistically forming, cutting, and arranging plastic items. The performative play on creation questions the nature of conception and production, and reminds the viewer of the complex processes that underlie both organic and inorganic entities.

Emphasizing its key visual characteristics of vibrant color and impenetrable smoothness, Pasquali also underlines plastic's inherent adaptability. Both abstract and conceptually loaded, her works operate in the space between sculpture, painting, and installation, further subverting categorical understandings of aesthetic experiences through the use of mirrored surfaces.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

After studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna, Italy, Francesca Pasquali cofounded "Resilienza Italiana" in 2013 to bolster sculpture by both contemporary and emerging artists. A finalist of the 2015 Cairo Prize and Second Prize at the Henraux Foundation Prize in 2014, Pasquali has been invited to participate in several major international art fairs. Her works are housed in important private and public institutions such as the Museo Diocesano, the MAR Museo d'Arte della Città, the Ghisla Art Collection, and the Thetis Foundation.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East for the first time, the gallery is dedicated to supporting the evolving practice of established artists.

Press Inquiries: For more information, images and prices, please contact iman@leilahellergallery.com