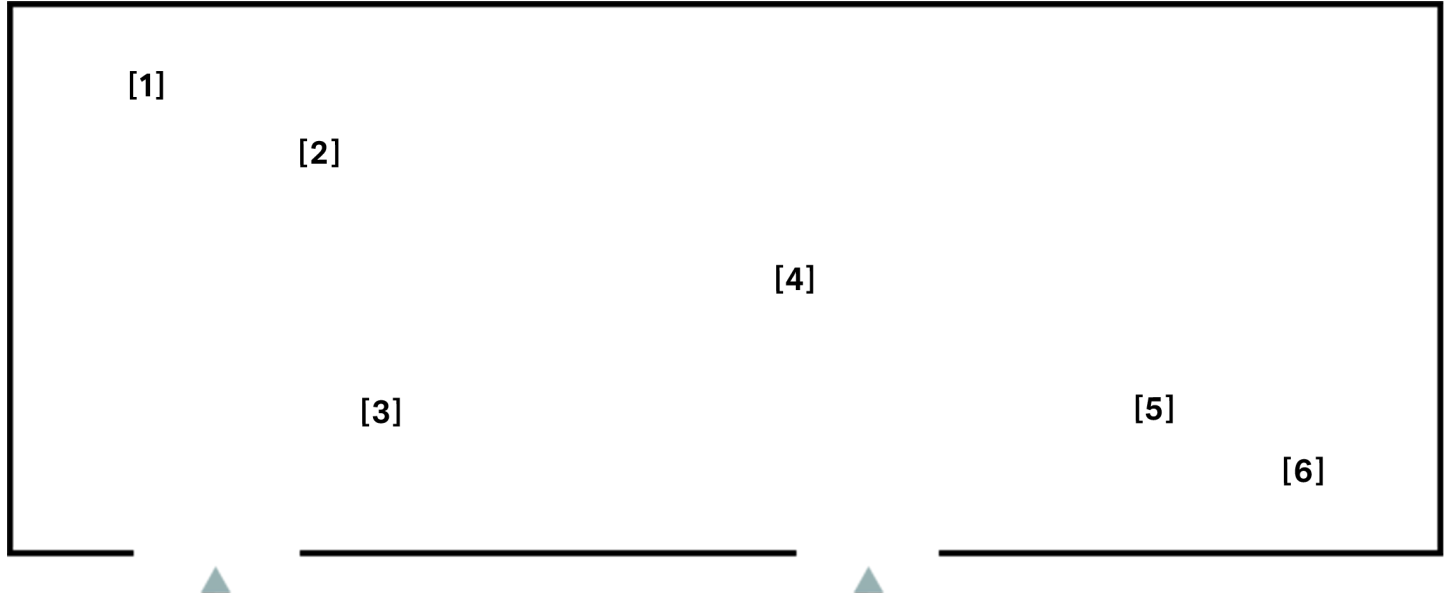


Sarah Stevenson

Before the Storm

Main Hall



[1] *Spike*, 2021, metal wire, fishing line, 13 x 4.9 in.

[2] *Spine*, 2021, metal wire, fishing line, 14.75 x 2.9 in.

[3] *Bruise*, 2021, metal wire, fishing line, 9.5 x 3.9 in.

[4] *Nimbus*, 2021, metal wire, fishing line, 12.5 x 39 ft.

[5] *Burn*, 2021, metal wire, fishing line, 10 x 4 ft.

[6] *Bean*, 2021, metal wire, fishing line, 11 x 3.9 ft.

Sarah Stevenson

Before the Storm

Main Hall



Six of Sarah Stevenson's evanescent sculptures float in the vast industrial space of Fonderie Darling's Main Hall. Silhouetted parallel and perpendicular lines connect and interweave with metal hoops hung from the ceiling. Sarah Stevenson's vibrant and airy volumes, reminiscent of giant hoop skirts, create spaces that are both open and contained, light and dense. Some of these elegant, assertive and imaginative constructions are inspired by the biological world, such as **Bean** [6], **Burn** [5] and **Nimbus** [4], while others evoke the human body, **Bruise** [3] and **Spine** [2]. Other, more abstract works reference discernible elements from architecture and design, such as **Spike** [1]. Sarah Stevenson's creative process begins with the drawing of complex preparatory grid diagrams, which are then transferred into three-dimensional space, becoming a web of knotted coloured threads that trace out well-defined lines and geometric shapes.

The presence of these works, often at the limit of visibility, attracts our gaze and incites us to walk around them, so to better grasp the pieces in their entirety. When examined up close, their outer layers, made up of interwoven threads, allow us to see the inside of the sculptures, and to consider their volume¹. From further away, they become almost transparent, and, depending on the background over which they are viewed, neutral or textured, the pieces softly appear and disappear into a field of visual vibration. Varying natural and artificial lighting adds another variable to the equation. Our gaze thus tries to grasp forms that are always escaping us, forcing us to constantly adjust and readjust our ways of looking. Metaphorically, the fishing line making up these sculptures prompts us to make the connection with cages, traps for the eyes. The challenge the pieces pose to our sense of vision is compounded by our dynamic physical experience of them. Seemingly weightless, hung from the high ceiling, but floating just inches from the ground, these soft and hollow forms seem to be levitating. In addition to this spatial disorientation, the works rotate almost imperceptibly on a vertical axis, a phenomenon created by the airflow within the vast space, and by visitors' movements. The impressive scale of these pieces, defined by simple mesh canvas forms, seems out of proportion when compared to their apparent weight and

density, aspects that further disrupt our relationship to them. Their tenuous appearance also contrasts with the vast space, maintaining a tension between the works and their exhibition context. These physical and visual experiments profoundly destabilize us, and indeed bring us to question our own bodies, and the space they occupy in this immense room.

Initiated in 2018 — in continuity with earlier series of poetic objects such as *Under Glass* (1992-1999), *Multiples* (2001-2014) and *Animation* (2008-2012) —, this body of work represents the apogee of Sarah Stevenson's series *Wireframe*, ongoing since 1997. For this exhibition, the artist seeks to push her abilities to their limit, indeed realizing the largest sculptures of her career to date, some of them double-layered, 3.4 metres high, and one metre in diameter. Existing somewhere between the organic and the mechanical, Sarah Stevenson's works — created with virtuosity, craft, methodological techniques, and simple materials — here take on a technological appearance, resembling a vertex mesh made up of dots and nodules.

For Sarah Stevenson, the exhibition title *Before the storm* evokes that strange moment of calm that precedes violent weather. This relationship to time that is suspended, peaceful yet unsettling, invites meditation, and allows us to be moved by the physical experience, while remaining focused on looking and the body within an architecture that resonates with the emptiness that these works indeed contain.

Caroline Andrieux
Translated by Simon Brown

1. The earliest works (1997) from the series *Wireframe* were created using translucent fabric membrane.

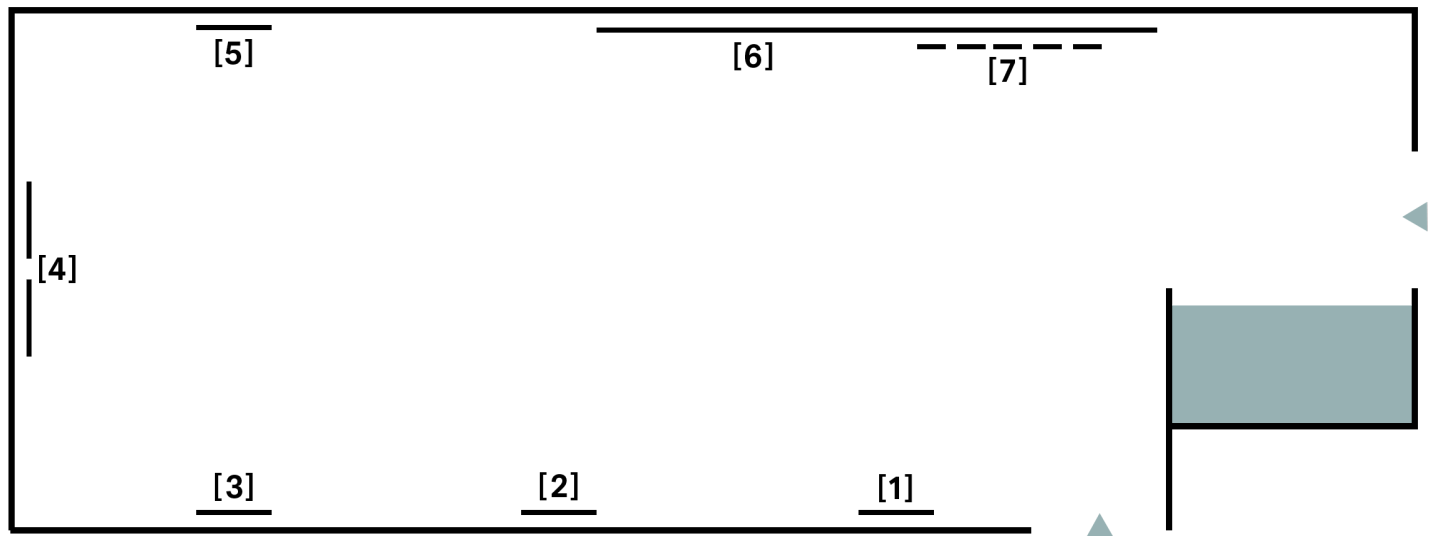
SARAH STEVENSON

Sarah Stevenson is an artist working with sculpture and drawing. Born in England, she grew up in various cities across Canada, received a BFA from the University of Victoria in 1984, and settled in Montreal in 1988. Stevenson's work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions in Canada and abroad, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Bologna and the Esker Foundation in Calgary. Stevenson has been represented by Galerie Blouin/Division since the early 1990s and more recently by Galerie Trépanier Baer in Calgary.

Jeanette Johns

Of things as they happen to be

Small Gallery



[1] *Lecturn Basket*, hand woven cotton, 15 x 37 x 11 in.

[2] *Folded Curtain*, hand woven linen and cotton, brass, 116 x 36 x 13 in.

[3] *Shadow Stairs Reflected*, hand woven cotton, brass, 39 x 90 in.

[4] *Shadow Windows*, hand woven cotton, brass, 80 x 92 in.

[5] *Shadow Stairs*, hand woven cotton, brass, 39 x 90 in.

[6] *Linenfold for a Wall*, hand woven linen and cotton, 17 x 2.8 ft.

[7] *Moulding Profile*, stamped and rolled ink on paper, 20 x 15 in.

From left to right:

Moulding Profile #53

Moulding Profile #55

Moulding Profile #48

Moulding Profile #46

Moulding Profile #47

Jeanette Johns

Of things as they happen to be

Small Gallery



Jeanette Johns's work asks viewers to pay attention, to become aware of the scientific conventions and logical principles that govern our understanding of the world. Jeanette Johns is particularly interested in those disciplines that render natural phenomena intelligible to us as humans, such as mathematics and geography. Calibrated to the limitations of our senses, the internal operations of the eye, and the effects of gravity, these universalist systems translate our experience of reality. Inspired by architectural drawing, optical illusions, science photography, and loom weaving - a technique she acquired for the production of this body of work, Jeanette Johns creates poetic objects that lay bare the workings of the human mind.

While landscape and architecture have always been at the core of Jeanette Johns's interests, we might imagine that the works making up *Of things as they happen to be* were created on a smaller physical scale, under the influence of a daily routine taking place almost exclusively between home and studio. Conceptually, this exhibition points to what was mentally available to the artist over the past pandemic year: domestic space, interior architecture, empty places of gathering. For her, this acute awareness of questions connected to space and perception is embodied in an act of isolation, transformation and reproduction. Any object becomes strange if we stare at it long enough; the mind spins and ends up settling on our surroundings: walls, surfaces, windows, furniture. In the context of a narrow horizon of possibility and a restrictive present moment that seems to stretch out endlessly, Jeanette John's artistic revelations indeed simply echo things as they happen to be¹.

Shadow Windows [4] is a diptych inspired by the motifs of the windows in Jeanette Johns's studio, located in the residency area of Fonderie Darling, in the building annexed to the exhibition spaces. Woven black and white cotton threads create the illusion of an artificial opening onto the exterior, according to a logic of reciprocity where one feels trapped within a given space. For **Shadow Stairs [5]** and **Shadow Stairs Reflected [3]**, Jeanette Johns uses shadow-weaving technique to trace out an interwoven blue and pink staircase. The inclusion of a pew, as well as how the works are mounted — sometimes on the wall like tapestries, other times

on a display stand, as with **Lecturn Basket [1]** — conjure up the atmosphere of a place of worship. In some sense, this classic, almost solemn mode of presentation brings Jeanette Johns's practice into the fundamental sphere of social ritual that encompasses artworks, bodies, and architecture. Here, actual space is visually rendered via complex geometric models and decorative ornamentation. Linenfold, a well-know carving technique from the Middle Ages, appears in several forms throughout this body of work: screenprinted in **Linenfold for a Wall [6]**, in black cotton fabric in **Folded Curtain [2]**, and alongside modern moulding in the series **Moulding Profile [7]**². By transposing one single object or image via different forms and textures, Jeanette Johns highlights the degrees of separation that exist between reality and how it is represented.

In this exhibition, Jeanette Johns is able to shift the image towards three-dimensional space by means of a loom and weaving pattern software, tools that entail complex techniques and endless hours of practice. A symbol of traditional feminine labour, her use of the loom suggests a parallel between women's work and artists' work, while also questioning the value of technical know-how and self-learning. In looking at these pieces, we can't help but imagine the enormous amount of labour behind each one of them. However, we also have the impression that through her use of methodical repetition, Jeanette Johns is able to transform time into something other than itself: work hours become woven squares, lengths of coloured cloth. *Of things as they happen to be* indeed evokes the idea that time—no matter what we do or don't do with it—always ends up slipping through our fingers.

Milly-Alexandra Dery
Translated by Simon Brown

1. The exhibition's title is taken from novelist Zadie Smith's book *Intimations: Six Essays*, published during the pandemic. In the short story *Peonies*, Smith tells the story of a scientist who gives a piece of charcoal to a monkey kept in captivity, expecting some sort of revelatory or transcendental form of expression from the animal. However, the caged monkey only draws the bars of its cage, causing Smith to remark that "the revelation (turned) out to be one contingency, of a certain set of circumstances — of things as they happen to be" (Smith, p. 3).

2. Linenfold is a type of relief carving used for decorating wooden panels. This technique imitates folded fabric or paper, and was popular in Europe from the 14th century onwards.


JEANETTE JOHNS

Johns comes from Winnipeg and holds a BFA in Printmaking from the University of Manitoba, and an MFA in Studio Arts (Print Media concentration) from Concordia University. She participated in many production and creation residencies, in Canada, the USA and Finland. In 2016, she published the artist book *With Sufficient Distance*, printed in risograph by Parameter Press.

Jeanette Johns is one of the 2019-2022 laureates of Montreal Studios, a long-term creative residency at Fonderie Darling. As part of the Sponsorship Program, the artist is generously supported by Lillian & Billy Mauer (2021) and by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (2020-2021).

Éditions du remue-ménage

Reading platform



The Éditions du remue-ménage occupy the bookshelf in front of the Reading Platform, where they present a selection of some fifteen titles, including a few recent releases as well as albums and books from the collection on women's artistic practices. This exhibition also puts forward the new collection *Les Martiales*, inaugurated by *Chroniques frigides de modèle vivant*, by Pascale Bernardin. This invitation to occupy the space attached to the Small Gallery was conceived by Fonderie Darling in resonance with the spring programming, which features the work of two women artists. Through books and through artworks, the reflection continues on issues about creation, the body, the domestic space and about the question of labour, whether it is of artistic nature or as it's typical associations with the feminine lifestyle and condition.

REMUE-MÉNAGE is a beacon of feminist publishing, a reference for anyone interested in women's history, speech, creation and experience. In 1975, a group of women eager for feminist readings that were still not accessible enough decided to go in search of texts and women writers. They rolled up their sleeves and a few months later founded Éditions du remue-ménage. Remue-ménage took shape in the great activist ferment of the 1970s, which gave rise to several important feminist groups and movements. For 45 years, Remue-ménage has been disseminating and supporting feminist creation, nourishing reflection on the situation of women and on gender issues, exploring innovative themes and approaches, introducing new authors and supporting the work of accomplished women authors. Its catalog, now numbering over 300 titles, reflects several waves of the feminist movement, a variety of literary forms and fields of interest: artists, writers, philosophers, historians, political women, activists and workers from diverse backgrounds. Tenacious and creative, the editors of Remue-ménage publish daring books, a gamble that is often risky, but always necessary.

“The laboratory, the experience of Martiales sets up spaces that make possible the freedom, sovereignty and valour of certain female subjects who are still too little hoped for as authors.”

- Stéphane Martelly,
director of *Les Martiales* collection,
Éditions du remue-ménage

Jackson Slattery

Red Hot Chilli Peppers/Bird in a lightwell

Entrance Hall



Jackson Slattery attempts to create paintings that are in equal parts sincere and indifferent, both stylistically and conceptually. In addressing this binary, his focus falls on the relationship between the viewer, the painter and the painting whilst acknowledging the system in which the works are made. In this ongoing body of work, Jackson Slattery is reducing his subject matter to light, providing a detailed visual diary that is devoid of context and recognizable subject matter. Time, presence and the shared experience are Jackson Slattery's core concerns in this series of paintings.

Jackson Slattery has shown both locally and internationally, including solo presentations at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Shodoshima Triennale, Japan; and Galerie Desaga, Cologne. Recent group shows include, *DES HORIZONS D'ATTENTE*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, *En bonne compagnie*, Bradley Ertaskiran and *Vous êtes (je suis) ici*, Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain Inc. He has also participated in several international residencies which include: ISCP, NYC; Summlung Lenikus, Vienna; and Stonehouse, France. Slattery's work is in private, public and institutional collections, both locally and overseas, including the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Canada.

Red Hot Chilli Peppers/Bird in a lightwell

Oil on linen

10" x 72"

2021

