

Greta Fieweger – Cutting Ties Installation

Knots hold an array of meanings. They are connective, tying things together, a crucial part of our clothing, rituals, and DNA alike. They are also fraught, however, in their ability to tangle. This installation makes use of both representational of these qualities of the knot to explore the crucial connections between close friends. I used ceramic knots and thick rope to catch myself in a net of knots on the ground in a posture similar to that of myself when I cannot get out of bed. A (small, due to covid restrictions) group of my close friends were the participants in the work. They each came up to me and cut out the ceramic knots from the net one by one until I was gradually freed. The heaviness of the ceramic and the thickness of the ropes were important in that they did restrict my movement. The use of ceramic to make the knots also complicated the work because it was somewhat fragile. Their removal had to be done with some care. They also turned out beautifully, in variegated tones of somber blues, greens, and ochre. After cutting the knots out, my friends were able to take them with them as a piece of the installation. The process physically mimicked the processes of friendship that allow us to help one another out of places of burden or distress by taking on small understandings of it and loosening. Acts like helping bring all the glasses from someone's room to the kitchen or sitting on someone's bed and helping them unpack an upsetting event are called up. This project is connected to my voice as an artist through this material process. My work tends to always drift back to a sense of need to work through emotional or mental processes physically. Including others as a part of this process felt very vulnerable, but rewarding.

One artist who I consider inspirational is Lin Tianmiao. In her painstaking and beautiful installations, she examines material on an incredible depth. In many of her works, she confronts what she refers to as the "tangled circumstances" of womanhood by engaging with the repetitive act of wrapping and spooling thread, a chore she loathed as a young girl, in bringing it into a mass use in installations that take years to complete. The way in which Lin uses materiality as a direct way to reflect upon complexity is something I relate to in my own artwork.

One new method I learned was working with ceramics, particularly glazing. I spent most of my work time testing out different combinations of glaze in order to achieve the ideal colors. The unpredictability of the process was incredibly exciting for me, and even more exciting when I achieved my desired results.



Spreads from accordion-fold documentation book:

cutting ties

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