



KENNEDY
YANKO
HIGHLY
WORKED

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DENNY DIMIN GALLERY NEW YORK

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GALLERY



Kennedy Yanko
Highly Worked

February 1st - March 10th, 2019



DENNY DIMIN
GALLERY

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KENNEDY YANKO'S *HIGHLY WORKED*: THE MANY LIVES OF COPPER

By Hall Rockefeller

We were taught in elementary school that copper turns green when it oxidizes. But certainly no one ever told us that green is just the beginning of what this material is capable of doing--no one told us that copper, which starts with its sheen of unburnished golden brown, can also turn aqua, sky blue, magenta, and a spectrum of colors in between.

This facet of copper's chemical makeup is brought to the fore in Kennedy Yanko's *Highly Worked*, in which her signature brightly colored latex skins reveal the surface complexity of this aged metal by articulating what is already there, bringing out details we may not have seen otherwise. This is, after all, what drives Yanko: In digging through salvage yards in Brooklyn and hammering at the scrap metal she finds there, she is in pursuit of affinities and hopes to show the way basic forms like colors and shapes--even atoms--can find harmony.

She explains this to me in her studio as we sit over a plate of couscous and cucumber salad that she's thrown together, a recipe she's picked up from another Bushwick-based artist with whom she frequently swaps advice and information. From this vantage she can easily refer to the work that hangs around us, pull out books that inform her work, or point to images she's collected. At one point she even shows me a portfolio of the early photographs she took on architecture expeditions with her father growing up in St. Louis. Though her work is abstract, the artist clearly engages with history, placing value on the ways we choose to both interpret and obscure it.

Yanko recognizes that we spend our lives gathering facts and associations that shape the way we think, but she also recognizes that it is the duty of the artist to break these associations and shift the way we see. That she has chosen to go about this by using latex, a material that is texturally contrary to the metal at her work's center, is also part of the point. Sometimes in contrast we reach synthesis. By bunching up or folding her skins, she points out the structural nature of copper, a soft metal which has been valued for millennia for its ductility, as it is easily drawn into wires and spread into sheets.

While we might be tempted to put Yanko in the category of sculptor that includes John Chamberlain and Lynda Benglis, Yanko's inspiration goes beyond the surface of the material similarities she shares with these particular artists. Our first glimpse into how she thinks about this work is in looking at her skins, which have been laid flat as a background (for the first time in the artist's body of work), emphasizing the painterliness of these sculptures. By using the skin as backing, Yanko has differentiated background from foreground, placing her work in line with a different tradition. "I don't think of myself as a sculptor," she says, as she thinks instead about gesture and how form can serve color. For this reason, *Highly Worked* might have more in common with Renaissance painting than with modern sculpture.



On my visit to the artist's studio, we spoke about the Western European tradition of painting on copper, which lasted roughly from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Before painting could begin, the copper surface had to be prepared in order to receive paint, a process which has captivated Yanko. The surfaces of these works had to be marked with knife and hammer in order to create a texture to which paint could adhere. The labor was worth the exertion, as paintings on copper bear an inner luminosity that is unrivaled by similar works on canvas.

Highly Worked, then, is Yanko's homage, her own version of this process. In addition to being worked by the artist's hand, her material, which in a past life were copper drain pipes, has first been worked by outdoor elements, bringing forth the array of colors which the artist, in turn, has chosen to emphasize. Worked, also, was the original deposit of copper, mined from the earth and then fashioned into gutters that would be affixed to houses at the turn of the century. In both cases, a worked surface is a precursor to art making.

But for Yanko, a worked surface is also a precursor to unmaking. In each of her pieces she intends to obscure the scrap metal's original function, breathing "new life" into something which has exhausted its old use. Here she departs from her Renaissance predecessors and insists that copper, throughout history a vehicle for the beauty of paint, can be itself the star of the show.



Installation views, "Highly Worked", by Kennedy Yanko, Denny Dimin Gallery, February 1st - March 10th, 2019



Kennedy Yanko
Holy Worked
2019
Copper, bronze, and urethane paint
58 x 28 x 35 inches/147 x 71 x 89 cm





Kennedy Yanko
WDK I
2018
Copper, paint, wood
56 x 43.5 x 10 in/142 x 110 x 25 cm





Kennedy Yanko
Painting
2018
Copper, paint
34 x 33.5 x 22 in/86 x 85 x 56 cm





Kennedy Yanko
Mend
2019
Copper, paint
39 x 25 x 12.5 in/99 x 64 x 32 cm





Kennedy Yanko
Convex
2018
Copper, paint
28.5 x 20 x 12 in/72 x 51 x 30 cm



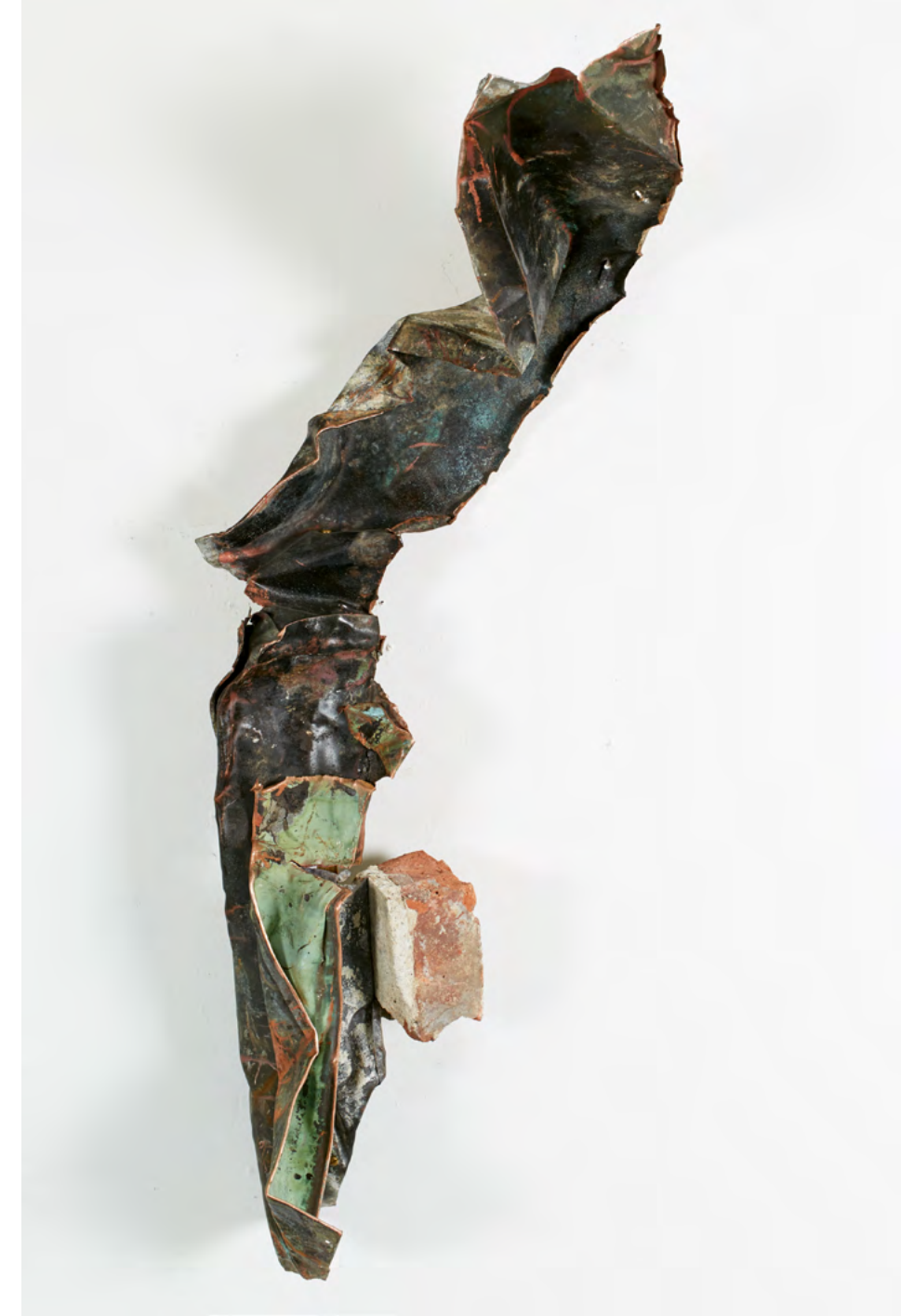


Kennedy Yanko
WDK II
2018
Copper, paint, wood
38 x 17 x 6 in/97 x 43 x 15 cm





Kennedy Yanko
Cuprum
2018
Copper, brick
34 x 9.5 x 9 in/86 x 24 x 23 cm





Kennedy Yanko
3
2019
Copper, paint
10.5 x 13 x 9.5 in/27 x 33 x 24 cm





Kennedy Yanko
Occupied
2019
Copper, paint
9.25 x 11 x 9 in/24 x 28 x 23 cm





Kennedy Yanko
P2
2019
Copper, paint
10.5 x 13 x 9.5 in/27 x 33 x 24 cm



CURRICULUM VITAE

Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York
Born 1988 in St. Louis, MO

EDUCATION

2009 San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2019 *Highly Worked*, Denny Dimin Gallery, New York, NY
2018 *Chasing Time*, Leyendecker Galeria, Tenerife, Canary Islands
2013 *Alchemy in Silent Spaces*, Idiosyncrasy Gallery, New York, NY
2012 *Permutations*, The Paragon Theater, St. Louis, MO
2010 *Paroxysm*, Art Monster, St. Louis, MO
2009 *Wu-Wei*, Abstrakt Gallery, St. Louis, M

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019 *Harlem Perspectives*, The Faction Art Space, New York, NY
Parallels and Peripheries, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit, Michigan
2018 *Art Basel Miami*, Kavi Gupta Gallery, Miami, FL
UNTITLED Miami, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Miami FL
Cry of Victory and Short Walks to Freedom, Projects+Gallery, St. Louis, MO
Outside In 2, Michael David Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
Parallels and Peripheries, ArtCenter South Florida, Miami, FL
The Barn Show 2018, Johannes Vogt Gallery, Brooklyn NY
Alchemy, BRIC Arts Media, Brooklyn, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS CONTINUED

2018 *Senses and Perceptions*, Mana Contemporary, Jersey City, NJ
The Aesthetics of Matter, VOLTA, New York, NY
Out of Line, Long Gallery, Harlem, NY
2017 *Projects Miami Beach 2017*, Pulse Contemporary Art Fair, Miami, FL
Hidden in Plain Sight, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York, NY
2015 AART, Joseph Gross Gallery, New York, NY
2014 *I Kan Do Dat*, Rush Art Galleries, New York, NY
Art Now, Poppington Gallery, New York, NY

RESIDENCIES

2018 Artist Residency, Galeria Leydendecker, Tenerife, Canary Islands
2017 Artist Residency, Fountainhead, Miami, FL
2013 Artist Residency, Idiosyncrasy Gallery, New York, NY
2010 Artist Residency, Atlantic Center of the Arts, New Smyrna Beach, FL
2009-12 Resident Performer, The Living Theatre, New York, NY

PERFORMANCES

THE LIVING THEATER NEW YORK, NY

2012 Seven Meditations on Political Sado-Masochism
2011 History of the World
2010 Korach
2009 Red Noir
Eureka

SELECTED PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

2018 "From Lead to Gold." *Less Than Half*. Rockefeller, Hall. October 24
"All the Feels: Nana Ya Asare Boadu and Kennedy Yanko." *Cultured*. Joseph, Jae. July
"Artist of the Week: Kennedy Yanko." *Milk.xyz*. Williams, Kristie. April 9
"How Artist Kennedy Yanko Went from Bodybuilding to Metalworking". *Vice*. Sargent, Antwuan. March 8
2017 "Three Pulses: Ventiko, Fischer Cherry, and Kennedy Yanko." McVey, Kurt. November 22.
"Studio Visit with Kennedy Yanko in Bushwick, Brooklyn." *Gallery Gurls*. Hernandez, Jasmin. October 22.
2013 "It's A Little About Kennedy Yanko." *Interview Magazine*. McVey, Kurt. November 8

BIO

Kennedy Yanko is in the the JP Morgan Art Collection, and the collections of Beth Rudin deWoody, and Helyn Goldenberg. Her work was included in the inaugural exhibition at Jenkins Johnson Projects, *Hidden in Plain Sight*, curated by Derrick Adams. In 2018 Yanko was named "Artist of the Week" during Armory Week by Milk Magazine and profiled by Vice. Recently, she exhibited in *Cry of Victory and Short Walks to Freedom* as part of Hank Willis Thomas' national For Freedoms project, as well as *Parallels and Peripheries* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit and *Alchemy*, at BRIC Arts Media, Brooklyn, NY. In 2019 she will participate in the Art Lux residency in San Diego, CA. Yanko attended the San Francisco Art Institute.



Photo credit: Jorge Quinteros