

**BROOKLYN RAIL**  
CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS AND CULTURE

Jessica Stockholder  
by Stephanie Buhmann  
Mitchell Innes & Nash  
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In this exhibition of works from 2006, Stockholder continues to transform commonplace objects into sculptural microcosms of saturated color and vivid form.

While embracing a looseness that endows her work with a sense of improvisational freedom, Stockholder does not hide the fact that there is a method to her mad, vibrant arrangements of plastic, furniture, light bulbs, or linoleum—to name only a few. In that regard, she can be linked to Swiss artist Dieter Roth, whose monumental collages of frequently overlooked objects radiate with an unsettling mystique. However, the Seattle-born Stockholder is much cleaner in her touch, with crisply delineated forms. In her hands, an electric cord becomes a whimsical line drawing, a slithering curve leading the eye from the sculpture into its surroundings.

Stockholder's constructions never shake a painterliness that feels at ease with such Pop icons as Robert Rauschenberg or Jasper Johns. Near the entrance to the exhibition, she has hung a yellow laundry basket next to an abstract painting on wood and, among other objects, a large cutout number five. While each element might be understood as a mini-homage to a specific art movement (Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop), together they are fused into a single horizontal equation. Stockholder was trained as both a painter and sculptor, and her eye for color favors an exuberant expressionism that contrasts splotches of white and black with deep oranges, bright yellows, sexy pinks, and Mediterranean blues.

Overall, these sculptures are concise, and compared to earlier works, less installation-driven. Each composition allows breathing room between elements, underscoring their well-thought-out formal relationships, and avoids distractingly busy detail or overloaded information. Stockholder doesn't lose the unique characteristics of each element; rather, she achieves unity by embracing the diversity inherent in her materials. Just as Lego pieces preserve their identity no matter what the context, be it a house, airplane, or giraffe, with Stockholder a plastic bucket always remains a plastic bucket. It's within the symphonic convergence of the sculpture that its specific surface and shape take on a broader formal significance.



## MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

Stockholder nourishes the element of surprise not through confrontation, but by discovering unexpected beauty. At times as sweet as cotton candy, Stockholder's work does not shy away from light seduction. While the materials might be humble, their color sparkles like precious puzzle pieces. The household objects she employs open the door for private introspection, an interior narrative inspired by each element's specific function or associations; in Stockholder's oeuvre, the tools of daily life are wrested from the commonplace and haunt our memories through the intervention of art. No material is too ordinary, or signature style too well-known, to be surprising or relevant.