



# HANA MILETIĆ

Born 1982, Zagreb, HR

Lives and works in Brussels, BE

Hana Miletić has held recent solo exhibitions at Foundation Walter & Nicole Leblanc, Brussels, BE (2025); MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA (2024); Kunsthalle Mainz, DE (2023); Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka, HR; MUDAM Luxembourg (2022); Bergen Kunsthall, NO (2021); and WIELS, Brussels, BE (2018).

Her work was also included in Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, BD (2023); Manifesta 14, Prishtina, XK (2022); the 13th Sharjah Biennial (2017) and has been exhibited in group survey exhibitions at institutions including Antenna Space, Shanghai, CN; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, AT; Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, UK; Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, HR; among many others.

Her work is in the permanent collections of Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam; Flemish Parliament, Brussels; Frac Grand Large - Hauts-de-France, Dunkirk; Institut d'art contemporain (IAC), Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes; Kadist, Paris; KANAL Pompidou, Brussels; MAK Museum, Vienna; M Museum, Leuven; MUDAM, Luxembourg; MuHKA, Antwerp; Museum of Contemporary Art (MSU), Zagreb; Mu.ZEE, Ostend; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Susch Museum, Susch. In 2021 Miletić was awarded the Bâloise Art Prize.

ARTnews  
May 7, 2025

# e-flux Criticism

## Hana Miletić's "Desire Lines"

Chris Murtha

**Magenta Plain, New York**  
May 6–June 21, 2025



View of Hana Miletić's "Desire Lines" at Magenta Plains, New York, 2025. Image courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains.

Although her practice is rooted in photography, Hana Miletić's first solo exhibition in New York contains no images. Instead, the eight handwoven textiles adorning the walls of the gallery are convincing recreations of ad-hoc repairs and temporary structures the artist photographs as she traverses urban centers—in this case, the surrounding Chinatown neighborhood. Above the reception desk, for example, hangs a looped, twisted, and knotted necklace of woven caution tape that may prompt viewers to proceed with heightened awareness. There is also a crocheted “carrot orange” net reinforced in its sagging midsection with a fibrous “mint green” sleeve (a tree guard?) and a slapdash web of overlapping silvery bands (a taped-up window?). Clinging to their former functions, even if obscurely, Miletić's mimetic weavings could easily pass for found objects.

Miletić used a 1970s-era manual (as opposed to mechanized) loom to create these works, each titled *Materials* (2023–25), but they more closely resemble machine-woven textiles than fiber art. Her woven translations of industrially produced plastics, like duct tape, netting, and tarps, relate neither to Anni Albers's abstractly patterned “pictorial weavings” nor the large-scale sculptures of artists like Magdalena Abakanowicz, Sheila Hicks, or Lenore Tawney. Artists working in fiber often contend with reductive and gendered associations with craft, production, and utility by critiquing and resisting such framings, but also by embracing them. With her expertly crafted but unassuming sculptures, Miletić foregrounds the difficulty, slowness, and invisibility of such labor, while also celebrating, in turn, the care and attention implicit in her overlooked subjects.

The Zagreb-born artist knitted and crocheted with female family members as a child, but only started weaving in 2015, after taking classes at a community arts center in Brussels, her adopted home since the early 1990s. Preferring the slower, more reflective and intentional process of weaving to the frictionless immediacy of digital photography, she pushed her images to the background of her practice. Though she doesn't, as a rule, exhibit her source

photographs, she includes them in publications, like her 2024 zine *Detours*. Once you've seen them, photography begins to haunt her sculptures. It becomes hard to look at her woven reinterpretations without imagining the original context—without filling in the blanks.

Extracted from pictures and translated into a new material, Miletić's sculptures are more elusive in their newfound autonomy. One minimalist composition from 2023—a felted white square overlaid with a bold, stop-sign-red “X” of woven wool and cotton—is based on the artist's snapshot (reproduced in *Detours*) of a wordless placard hinged to the doorway of a home slated for demolition. The message, in the photo, is clear—keep out. Miletić's version, though, is abstract and indeterminate: the “X” doesn't just deter; it can also be a reparative suture.



View of Hana Miletić's "Desire Lines" at Magenta Plains, New York, 2025. (Left) *Materials*, 2025. Hand-woven textile (ash gray organic cotton, grey paper yarn, silver metal yarn, and silver peace silk), 102 x 140 x 1 cm. (Center) *Materials*, 2025. Hand-woven and Jacquard-woven textile (copper orange repurposed polyester, dark beige paper yarn, and white repurposed polyester), 21 x 44 x 10 cm. (Right) *Materials*, 2024. Crocheted and hand-woven textile (carrot orange organic linen, mint green organic wool, metal wire, and pale mint repurposed polyrattan), 118 x 44 x 27 cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains.

The form is echoed in a neighboring work, from 2025, in which crisscrossing orange bands stretch from floor to ceiling. The message printed on the fabric —“Trains Not Stopping • Work In Progress”—becomes distorted and illegible as it repeats and extends from the work’s center. Resulting from the artist’s use of AI to expand her original photograph, it seems to be the only liberty Miletić permitted herself here. Placed in direct contrast to the artist’s meticulously replicative handwork, the garbled text hints at the role of digital photography in her process, while also suggesting the shortcomings of any machine-assisted translation.

The largest work in the show, a black tapestry nearly fourteen feet wide, is also its most pictorial. Resembling a patched-together window covering, its uneven edges appear stitched together by erratically applied blue dashes—painter’s tape faithfully replicated down to the loose fibers of torn and frayed edges. The otherwise blank expanse evokes a nocturnal seascape, with a long, uninterrupted, and sloping blue line defining a shore. As with the other works, Miletić fabricated this one with environmentally conscious and ethically sourced fibers such as organic wool, recycled and repurposed polyesters, and so-called “peace silk,” which is produced without killing the worms. The artist’s attention to care extends to her material choices as well.

In the past, Miletić has made space in her practice for collaboration, organizing communal felting workshops for female-identifying immigrants and hosting poetry readings and music performances inside her textile installations. Here, the people responsible for the original constructions remain, understandably, absent. While Miletić risks romanticizing and exploiting ruin, the arduous and conscientious process of handweaving honors the improvised resourcefulness and unintended aesthetics of her anonymously produced subjects. If these sculptures of repair, adaptation, and renovation are symbols of a city’s constant cycling between decay and renewal (or neglect and overdevelopment), her project seems at odds—perhaps intentionally so—with the gallery’s sterile quietude, which cloisters the show, and its visitors, from the bustling neighborhood just beyond the threshold.

ARTnews  
May 7, 2025

# ARTnews

## Fiber Art Has Officially Taken Over New York's Museums and Galleries

BY ALEX GREENBERGER

These days, seemingly everywhere you turn in New York, there are weavings stretched taut, installations spilling forth with wool, and canvases adorned with thread, bridging the gap between textile art and painting. Welcome to fiber art supremacy. It's been a long time coming.

Fiber art's ascent has been brewing for the past couple decades—something that Wendy Vogel **pointed out** in *Art in America*, referring to the flurry of museum shows devoted to the medium between 2014 and mid-2023, when her article was published. That period saw surveys for Anni Albers, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and Gee's Bend quilters. More recently, a retrospective for Ruth Asawa, whose wire sculptures were based on basket weaving techniques she learned in Mexico, has just **opened at SFMOMA** before heading out a national tour.

But now, after taking root in cities across the world, the trend appears to have planted deep roots in the New York art scene. Fiber art has begun appearing not only in institutions but also in blue-chip commercial galleries here, allowing it to infiltrate the upper echelons of the market and join the mainstream. The city has officially been fiber bombed, as evidenced by a Museum of Modern Art mega-survey devoted to recent work in the medium.

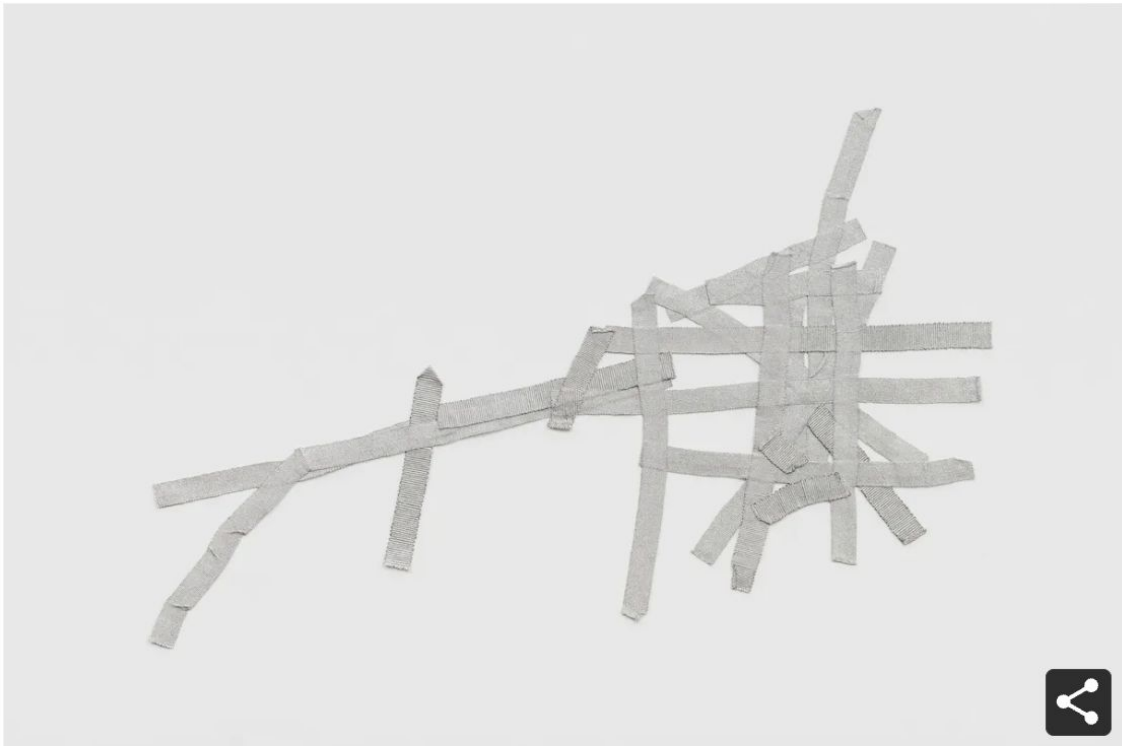
Why so much fiber all of a sudden? The simple answer has to do with the changing face of recent art history. Weavings, embroideries, and the like have long been awarded an asterisk in the canon—if they've been accepted into the canon at all. Typically, art in those mediums has been classed separately as craft in the West or denigrated as “women's work.” Thanks to the work of dedicated scholars, curators, and critics, fiber art has finally come in for reassessment.

The less sexy answer has to do with savvy dealers, who are reading the tea leaves and responding to the work of international curators. (Notably, however, fiber art is not on view at the mega-galleries and their competitors, who are mainly mounting painting shows this week.) No doubt many of those dealers are looking to the last two editions of the Venice Biennale. Last year's, curated by Adriano Pedrosa, contained a host of textiles and weavings, many of them by Indigenous artists; one alumna of that Biennale, the wonderful Wichí artist Claudia Alarcón, is showing **her collaborative**

**works made with the all-female Silāt collective** as part of her New York debut at James Cohan Gallery. It seems likely that similar exhibitions for other 2024 Biennale participants will soon follow.

For a detailed guide on the best fiber-related shows around New York this spring, read on.

## Hana Miletić at Magenta Plains



Hana Miletić, *Materials*, 2025.

Photo : Courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains

All the weavings in Hana Miletić's New York debut revolve around the notion of recycling, with the exhibition's checklist noting the works involve repurposed linen, polyester, and yarn. That befits the process behind these textiles, which are replicas of objects that Miletić encountered on city streets. She pays homage to that which appears to be refuse—bits of yellow caution tape, grids of duct tape stuck to storefront windows—but she never treats her detritus as waste. (That source material is not made obvious within the show itself, but it is cataloged, with accompanying photography, in a zine called *Detours*.)

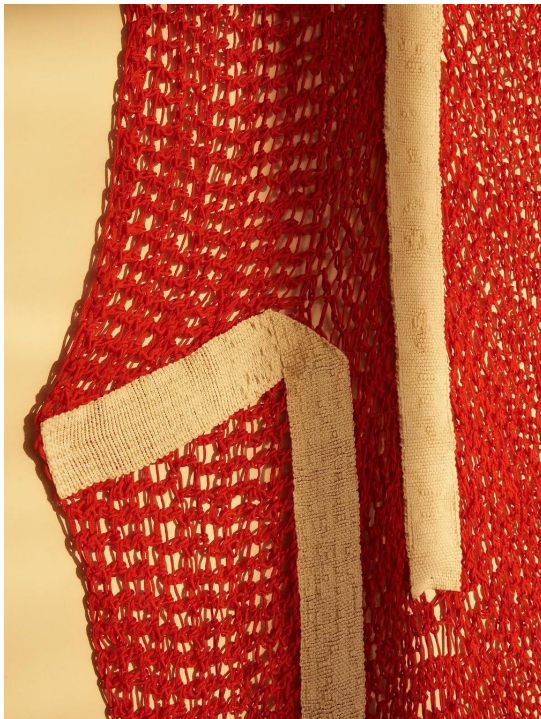
Born in Zagreb, in what is now Croatia, and based currently in Brussels, Miletić has been producing these weavings since 2015 as part of a series called “Materials.” The series has commonly related digital imaging technologies to weaving, and she returns to those themes once more in a new work, also titled *Materials* (2025). Miletić took a snapshot of an X-shaped area of crossed tape reading “TRAINS NOT STOPPING · WORK IN PROGRESS,” then imported it to Photoshop, where she used a generative AI tool to expand her image beyond its original frame. She then handwove the result, UV-printing the AI-generated gibberish onto her linen, cotton, and wool. In four places, Miletić adds woven strips to her piece, as though she were applying Band-Aids to wounded flesh—a heartwarming act of care for what some might consider to be garbage.

*At 149 Canal Street, through June 21.*

Maud Salembier | Minerve Brussels  
March 2025

MS When and how did you arrive at 'La Magnanerie'?

HM In the summer of 2015, I've been living here for almost ten years. Where I was born, in Yugoslavia, there are a lot of tall buildings from the 1960s like this one, because there is a great tradition of modernist architecture. I grew up in buildings like this, high above the ground. My grandmother lives in a high-rise and my mother lives in a building very similar to ours. So it's something that feels very familiar, but it's a style of living that I never imagined I would find here, because there are only a few blocks like this in Brussels. When I was looking for a place to buy in the city, I was walking around this neighbourhood and I saw this building—it looked so recognisable.



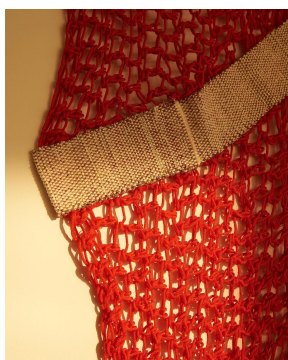
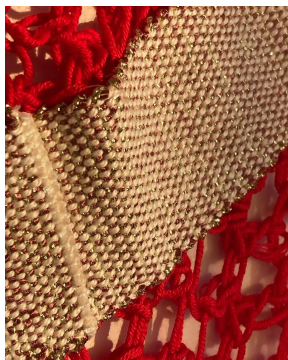
MS Did you know that mulberry trees and silkworms were once grown on this site? The building was named 'La Magnanerie' to keep this memory alive. A nice coincidence for someone like you who works with textiles, isn't it?

HM I didn't know that, amazing! In 2021 I did an exhibition at The Approach gallery in London about the production of silk. There used to be a large silk weaving industry in the area around the gallery. At the time when I was preparing the show, because of the pandemic, I couldn't travel to London to make a site-specific work—which I usually do for a solo show. So I decided to ground the works differently this time, by referring to the silk history of the neighbourhood. For this exhibition, I did a lot of research into silk cultivation, which is one of the most brutal ways of extracting fibre, because the silkworms are basically cooked to death. Their cocoons are put in hot water to extract the silk fibres, and the worms are burned to death in the process. Nowadays, there are less harmful ways of obtaining silk fibres: the silkworm is removed from the cocoon, which is still a violent procedure. Its home, its protective shell, is taken away. Apparently, some silkworms are then unable to produce new cocoons because they are overworked. The worms become like overworked workers, which I think is interesting to think about in terms of how capital exhausts both humans and non-humans. For the exhibition in London, I used some of this so-called peace silk because I was fascinated by the complexity of the process. I used it along with recycled silk and other recycled materials, as I usually do.

In the ten years that I have been weaving, I have been using more and more recycled and repurposed fibres, and this has come to define my colour palette. In the beginning I tried to stay close to documentary photography, trying to reproduce the colours of the original repairs as I had photographed them in public space. While learning to weave, I learned about the complexities of textile making, which often involves violent processes linked to extractive histories. It's a very complicated and sticky business, very troubled. My way of staying with the trouble is to use materials that already exist as much as possible and not to add to the production of things.

MAGENTA

PLAINS



MOUSSE Magazine  
July 3, 2024

# MOUSSE

“Espaces souples” from the publication *Tapta: Espaces souples. With Greet Billet, Hana Miletic & Richard Venlet*  
by Liesbeth Decan



*Tapta: Espaces souples. With Greet Billet, Hana Miletic & Richard Venlet at WIELS, Brussels, 2023.*

“My older sister told me that once, as a little girl, I arranged all my toys in a beautiful circle and started to dance between them and sing: ‘I’m Tapta, Tapta, Tapta.’ The family liked it, and I became Tapta. Forever.” (Tapta, 1997) <sup>1</sup>

Tapta (the pseudonym of Maria Wierusz-Kowalska, born Maria Irena Boyć) was born in Poland in 1926 and came to Belgium as a political refugee with her husband, Krzysztof, after taking part in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. She studied weaving at the La Cambre National School of Visual Arts, Brussels, from where she graduated in 1949. Shortly afterwards, the couple moved to the Belgian Congo (now Democratic Republic of the Congo), where they lived from 1950 to 1960. On their return to Belgium in 1960, until her sudden death in 1997, she worked in Brussels as an artist and—from 1976 until 1990—as a professor at La Cambre.

Oddly enough, the above quote about how Tapta got her nickname, and later artist’s name, already hints at some of the basic principles within her artistic practice: just as she, as a child, formed a “beautiful circle” with her toys and then began to dance and sing between them, later as an artist she would search for aesthetical shapes that—beyond the purely visual perception—also invite you to move around, between or even into them. It is also the case that however heavy and imposing some of her works may appear, the playful element will always be present.

The ensuing concept of “*sculpture souple*” (flexible sculpture), as Tapta called it, through which an “*espace souple*” (flexible, or supple, space) is created, played a key role in the setup of the exhibition *Tapta: Espaces souples. With Greet Billet, Hana Miletic & Richard Venlet*, of which the current publication is a direct representation. The ideas of spatiality and suppleness (and their interconnection) relate both to the historical oeuvre of Tapta (1926–1997) and the individual contemporary practices of Greet Billet (°1973), Hana Miletic (°1982) and Richard Venlet (°1964), which have been brought together in the exhibition. Furthermore, the two terms should be understood both physically and mentally: the artists’ works constitute, or interact with, physical as well as mental spaces, and both a fluidity of matter and a flexibility in thinking and feeling are at play.

From the 1960s onwards, Tapta established herself as an important member of a new generation of artists, who sought to redefine sculpture by using textiles and other flexible materials as sculptural elements. In doing so, she simultaneously took textile art beyond the categories of the decorative arts and crafts. She had her first solo exhibition in 1966 at the Galerie Les Métiers in Brussels, after which her work was shown in major exhibitions in Belgium and abroad, including at the 4th International Biennale of Tapestry in 1969 in Lausanne. This exhibition, in which her work was displayed alongside those of Magdalena Abakanowicz, Jagoda Buic, Elsi Giauque and Sheila Hicks, encouraged her to continue along the path of unconventional experimentation with textiles.

The exhibition *Tapta: Espaces Souples* focused on Tapta's signature works from the 1970s, in which she steadily distanced herself from traditional weaving by applying experimental techniques such as twisting her woven pieces and, in particular, through the use of ropes, which she knotted and joined together into organic volumes. Her work protruded outwards from the wall, became more three-dimensional and increasingly interacted with the space and the viewer, who was invited to experience the works not only visually but also in a tactile and physical manner, stepping around and even inside them.

"What's my dream? To create softly formed places that envelop you and protect you from the outside world. They become zones of peace and friendship.

What's my dream? To feel enveloped not only by these textile forms, but also by their extensions: large shadows on the walls. That's when real and imaginary, past and future merge and you feel reconciled with everything." (Tapta, 1974) <sup>2</sup>

An early manifestation of these experiments is *Falling Knots* (*Chute de noeuds*, 1970), consisting of thirteen off-white ropes that are irregularly and intricately knotted and are hanging down over a metal rod. These are no coarse ship's ropes, but soft woolen, cotton and linen ropes that show subtle material differences and invite visitors to touch them. They form a transparent curtain which, when hung against the wall, still refers to classical textile art (or painting, or *bas-relief*), but when hanging in the middle of the room, takes on the allure of a free-standing sculpture—or an anti-sculpture, as it is soft, hanging, transparent, and lying somewhere between a functional curtain and an autonomous work of art.

In 1973, Tapta realized two *Cocoons* (*Cocons*), which were displayed together probably for the first time in the exhibition at WIELS. Both pieces are made of undyed cotton ropes sewn together into an organic form, adorned with some sisal strings, loosely hanging down. Underneath is a circular carpet made from ropes of a rougher material (linen or hemp), lying on the floor. The carpets are rugs that are no different from the objects designed for domestic use, but simultaneously function as pedestals that give the sculptures a platform. The sculptures—especially *Cocoon n°1*—represent a giant cocoon, a nest. Not just an artwork to contemplate from a distance, but a place in which to shelter, to retreat. (A child said it wanted to crawl into it and read a book there.)

Viewed from another angle, the *Cocoons* also represent a larger-than-life vulva—soft and monstrous at the same time—positioning the works within the feminist discourse of the early 1970s. However, this sexualized imagery, reminiscent of the contemporary feminist art movement, is exceptional in Tapta's oeuvre, which is mainly formal and abstract. Tapta's feminism is rather situated in the pursuit of equal appreciation of people of all genders in the art world—"I am an artist, not a woman artist," she often repeated. At the same time, her textile sculptures, including or referencing domestic elements like rugs (in the *Cocoons*), curtains (as in *Falling Knots*), or room dividers (as in *Flexible Horizon*, 1977), another work that was displayed at WIELS, do refer to certain 1970s feminist concerns, such as the elevation of the domestic arts, the dismantling of gendered hierarchies of arts and crafts, and the dignifying of historically feminized labor. <sup>3</sup> Tapta never theorized or pronounced this explicitly, but decisively, almost naturally included high and low in her practice. To her, there existed no hierarchy between creating a monumental sculpture for an exhibition, weaving a poncho for herself or a friend, or covering a Bertioia Diamond chair with ropes for her own interior or commissioned by, for example, the Brussels architect Simone Guillissen-Hoa. As stated in the quote above, "to create softly formed places that envelop you and protect you from the outside world, [that] become zones of peace and friendship" is what she wanted to achieve.

If the *Cocoons* are not designed to be physically entered, then at least the round carpet will stimulate you to walk around it. This way, visual perception is accompanied by a physical experience; you cannot fully see the work without moving around it, as each side of it is different and equally interesting. Tapta invites a physical, tactile approach to her works, and this is also how they come about: not through sketches on paper, but by means of scale models, executed in the material of the ultimate artwork. Manipulating the material leads her to the final form of the work.

Find the full essay inside the publication *Tapta: Espaces souples*. With Greet Billet, Hana Miletic & Richard Venlet.

Glean  
April 5, 2024

# Glean

## HANA MILETIĆ

### BEHIND THE WARP

MIR (María Inés Rodríguez) I would suggest that we start this conversation at what I like to call 'the beginning', that is, a kind of epiphany that led to what we can appreciate today as your work.

HM (Hana Miletić) I used to practise a street photography of sorts, making images quickly with small disposable cameras in urban areas where I was living at the time, predominantly in my current residence of Brussels and my hometown of Zagreb. The fast pace of the photographic process that I was using, which also included making prints, confused me to the point that I started doubting what I was actually doing. I started feeling disconnected from the images I was making. It felt like I was quickly grabbing things instead of sitting with them and getting to know the neighbourhoods and the communities that I was engaging with better. So my work started to move away from photography, towards organising and editing other people's work. Ultimately I ended up weaving, which resolved the problem I had encountered with reproduction in my photography practice.

MIR When I think of your work, when I look at it, different references come to my mind. The presence of the fabric, the weft, the warp, the thread that builds something, takes me back to my initial training as a textile designer. Somehow, I like the idea that we went the other way round to find what we were really interested in and now we are here to talk about it.

HM Indeed, we have a similar trajectory. During art school I never imagined doing any kind of handwork or fibre work. I spent my days photographing, editing and printing pictures, using both analogue and digital methods, and reading critical theory. A few years after graduating, in a parallel movement of moving away from photography and towards organising, I enlisted in an evening course in weaving in a community art school in Brussels. As a child, I did a lot of handwork with my mother, grandmothers and nieces: embroidery, crochet, knitting ... but never weaving. After completing a series of technical exercises like warping threads, threading a loom and learning different binds, my weaving teacher asked me what I was plan-

ning to make. Her question startled me because I didn't come to the weaving class to be productive. To humour the weaving teacher, I brought some of my old photographs to class and said I would weave what is depicted on them: repairs and transformations, small and big, using different materials like tape, plastic and cardboard, applied to buildings, infrastructure and vehicles. That was in the autumn of 2015 and that is what I have been doing ever since, and what I want to do for the rest of my life.

MIR Somehow the process of observation involved in photography has marked your approach to weaving. As well as your way of walking the street and looking at it.

HM Yes, in the series of handwoven textiles entitled *Materials* I remake the mended and temporarily fixed structures that I encounter while walking in public space. The scale, colours and textures of each textile are based on the materials that were used in the original repair and that I captured in the photograph. I also install the works in the same positions (at the same heights) as the original repairs. For example, a piece of tape that was covering a door handle will be installed at hand level and not at the usual eye level. I use my photographs as 'cartoons' of sorts: in the sixteenth century, preparatory drawings were made on hard paper or cardboard — hence the name *cartoon* — before being woven into tapestries. Deeming the photograph a 'cartoon' indicates that it is indispensable to the process in a strictly utilitarian way. The photograph is a model, a draft, a drawing behind the warp. The weaving cannot happen without it but, once the weaving is done, the photograph is discarded. This is how photography sits in my work now, as a support structure. Weaving feels like a situated process that allows me to more consciously deal with the conditions and the transformations of everyday life. I hope to overcome the reliance on reproduction. That is why I prefer not to exhibit the photographic reproductions — the 'cartoons' — on which these works are based, but rather to give prominence to the interconnected processes of making, thinking and feeling that weaving allows.

MIR It is, in a way, how the great tapestries were — and still are — woven: an artist paints a design on a piece of cardboard that serves as a basis for the weavers. Take, for example, Goya and his famous *cartones* for the Real Fábrica de Tapices de Santa Bárbara. Or Rubens. Here and in the nearby region we have many examples and incredible tapestry manufacturers. I recently saw one belonging to the Lady and the Unicorn series of tapestries from the sixteenth century. Do you think this proximity also influenced your working process?

HM Hmm, I'm not sure that I was conscious enough about what I was doing to make that link from the start; I only started calling my photographs cartoons after a little while. It took me some time to figure out what I was doing in terms of the transformation and reproduction of images from reality into weaving via photography, although from the very beginning I did keep my photographs next to or underneath the loom while weaving, exactly as you do with cartoons.

Before going to art school in Antwerp, I studied art history and archaeology at university in Brussels, and I remember learning about cartoons, especially in relation to Rubens and the 'Flemish tapestries'. Though, at that time, I was more interested in the production of tapestries in terms of understanding the different power relations within the art world — including, amongst others, patrons, artists, weavers and merchants or dealers — than in the iconography itself.

MIR We were talking the other day about a picture of you as a child, with your grandmother and a cousin, spinning. When we talk about weaving, we often talk about knowledge, about transmission. I particularly remember a work by the Colombian conceptual artist María Angélica Medina titled *conversation piece*, which she began in the 1980s. She used to sit knitting on a small chair and would offer a chair to whoever wanted to join her in conversation. In a way, she brought her domestic space — and a type of work considered domestic — into the public space, to initiate an exchange with an audience.

HM Yes, as mentioned before, as a child I did a lot of hand-work with my family, but never weaving. A few years ago, my mother showed to her mother what I was making as an artist. Upon seeing my weavings, my grandmother mentioned that her own mother had once done something similar. My maternal great-grandmother was involved in a weaving community in the rural area of Lika in the first half of the twentieth century. Despite not having had access to an education, my maternal great-grandmother was using mathematical formulas to help other villagers warp and thread their looms. Unfortunately this story reached me only later in life; it got lost with my grandparents moving from the countryside to the city and my parents and me migrating to Belgium in the 1990s. That's why weaving feels so intimate, I think. The techniques that I use have been transferred to me by many weaving teachers and ancestors, consciously and subconsciously.

I can relate to how María Angélica Medina offers the audience a repetitive and meditative practice such as knitting to create the context and potential for something else to happen. This reminds me of the many conversations and encounters that took place during the participatory felting workshops that I have been facilitating since 2018 together with a group of women and non-binary people from the community arts centre Globe Aroma in Brussels. These 'Felt workshops', as we call them, are opportunities to experience how collective feelings can be formed through collaborative practices, located between stories and technique. There is also a micro-political dimension to the multiplicity of hands and voices, which the technique of felting poetically echoes. The differently coloured parts of the felts are still distinguishable, but up close you can see that they have gently become entangled. I imagine the same to be true for the interlaced loops of Medina and her audiences.



MIR I'm so glad you mention these workshops and how collective work has been present in your work. All these days, faced with the current situation, I've been thinking about the importance of coming together, of talking, of sharing experiences, of thinking, despite the differences in point of view — of how collectively we are a force. Perhaps this is a far-fetched metaphor for weaving, but it is what I imagine at this moment: weaves and warps, or knots, constructing something in a mental space that allows us to imagine and reconstruct something different from what we are living.

HM In retrospect, I think that I started facilitating these workshops to reconnect to the practices of commoning that I grew up with in Yugoslavia in the 1980s, and which seem to be hindered by how lives are organised today, by the architecture and infrastructure we share. For example, on the top floor of the high-rise in which my grandmother lives in Zagreb, there used to be a laundrette that all the inhabitants shared — you had to coordinate with the neighbours which colours of laundry you were washing when. Today this room no longer exists, unfortunately; after the building got privatised, the laundrette got converted into a lofty apartment and sold.

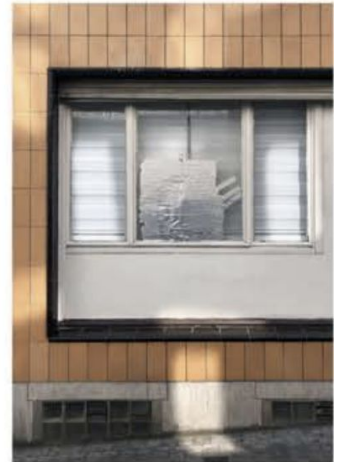
The Non-Aligned Movement that Yugoslavia co-founded in 1955 together with India, Egypt, Ghana and Indonesia, and that your home country of Colombia joined a bit later, has also been very inspirational when imagining how to organise collective work. I have been thinking about it often during the current moment. Ultimately it is about being in 'difference without separability', as Denise Ferreira da Silva wisely says.

MIR If there is one thing that interests and inspires me about our discussion, which began a few years ago, it is to see how — despite coming from countries that are so different geographically and politically — there are finally so many points in common, as well as differences that allow us to continue talking to each other.

HM Yes, we keep talking!

MIR To leave our conversation open to the future, I would like to mention the French-Hungarian architect Yona Friedman, who has been a great reference in my work and in my life. Friedman developed urban concepts such as the *Spatial City*, proposing that the city be organised freely by the citizens, and he referred to social utopias as the result of dissatisfaction and suggested that these utopias could be realised through a collective response. His visionary work over the years consisted of seeing the world not only as an entity that can be described by statistical methods, but also as being composed of individual entities that he called 'granules of space', entities with unpredictable behaviour that make it possible to bring to life a mobile architecture and an emancipated society.

HM Maybe an architecture that is radically mobile would help us move beyond the expectation of nation states. That would be a dream. We keep talking and dreaming.



*The Guardian*  
March 22, 2023

# The Guardian

## The Accursed Share review – old bomb casings make perfect plant pots

**Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh**

The violent nature of colonial-era debt is brought to life through evocative tapestries, mortar shell house decorations – and a Lubaina Himid rollcall

The Accursed Share, a new group exhibition featuring nine artists and artists' groups, aims to take our personal understanding of debt and put it into a global context. The exhibition explores the many narratives of debt, namely those generated and enforced through stolen land and the march of capitalism.

Moving through the rich architecture of the sprawling gallery spaces, we happen on weavings by Croatian artist Hana Miletić, replicas of lo-fi repairs she finds within city landscapes. Wing mirrors hastily reattached to cars, broken windows temporarily patched with gaffer tape – small quick fixes are made monumental, constructed with delicate fabrics and laboured over for hours, this attention repaying the debt of the initial action. The weavings are fixed unceremoniously to the gallery walls as though plastered on like bandages, giving the feeling they are holding the building together – quiet moments of resilience that try to contain the show's capitalist violence.

The works in *The Accursed Share* extract debt from our ideas of the personal and force us to acknowledge its impact on politics and community. The word “debt” is defined as something that is agreed by both parties. But what this exhibition shows us is that global debts, land debts, and colonial debts were never agreed. There was never negotiation – just extraction by means of western violence and power. As conversations about these severe infractions come into view, we need not only to acknowledge what is owed but to work out how to pay that back, and how to return the appropriate interest accrued.

*The National*  
March 19, 2023

# THE NATIONAL

## The Accursed Share: Exhibition looks into what really counts

19TH MARCH 2023 [CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [LEISURE](#)

**"WHEN you look at living creatures – from biological cells to humans – you see that everything in nature produces more energy than it requires. Cells take energy for themselves, but also for growth and multiplication. At some point, everything reaches the edge of its container. And at that point, there's no way to channel that extra energy productively, so it must be destroyed. This is what Bataille called 'the accursed share'."**

James Clegg is the curator of a new group exhibition at the Talbot Rice Gallery in Edinburgh, and he's explaining the root of the show's title. In his 1949 book, *The Accursed Share: An Essay On General Economy*, radical French writer and philosopher Georges Bataille critiqued consumerist and economic systems producing excess energy and waste that had no use.

Those artists include Turner Prize-winning Lubaina Himid, Marwa Arsanios, the Lebanese artist whose work meditates on the aftermaths of colonialism and privatisation, and terra0, the collective that examines possibilities around using digital technology to build benevolent, sustainable systems. Clegg has chosen Himid's *Naming The Money* piece for the exhibition, the haunting crowd of life-size human cut-outs that were a central part of her 2022 survey at London's Tate Modern. These hand-painted slaves represent the astronomical debt that slave traders and owners owe to the African diaspora.

Elsewhere, Hana Miletić's work looks at another kind of debt – the debt that's owed to history and its remnants. The Croatian artist uses textiles to create tributes to everyday objects that have been repaired and handed down to live again, while Filipino artist Cian Dayrit recruits local artisans to work with him on pieces that document abuse of the poor at the hands of self-appointed rulers and multinational companies. His *Et Hoc Quod Nos Nescimus* (Latin for "and what we do not know") embroidery piece is an upside-down world map, with the usually dominant south flipped and relegated, giving the north global prominence, even if just on a textile.

CURA.  
Winter 2022

## CURA.

### Haven't you been moved by the care you see in human gesture? On Hana Miletić's work

Text by Chus Martínez

I have a book of short stories of Catalan writer Pere Calders at the side of my bed. His short stories constitute the most amazing collection of small individual gestures capable of repairing the whole universe. In one of his stories, a man cares so much about the state of the things and people around him that he barely manages to get a little food into his stomach. The very moment he steps out of his house, a person, an animal, a wall, a bench needs a little bit of fixing and the day ends only few meters away from where he started it. Having lived almost all his life in the same building, every time he bumps into an older neighbor who complains about a little problem, he concentrates all his efforts in trying to assist: holding shopping bags, belittling the fact that grandchildren do not visit too often anymore, making sure there is enough food for the few street cats still in the neighborhood... A life dedicated to care implies a predisposition to think about one's time as the time for others.

I always loved how Calders' short stories describe the universe of acute observers of the real. Almost always men like himself, who seem to be unable to move on with their lives since the lives of others are always in front of them. These characters force us to see every detail, from the peeling of a wall in a building that needs a good coat of paint to the complaints that we constantly express in our everyday lives.



Who would think of a practice capable of being attentive to the universe in its smallest details? Who would invest in repairing every material and situation that needs our personal investment knowing that solving these rather small problems will never bring any big reward? That's why I think the practice of Hana Miletić is so special. If you look without paying attention, you may think she is doing a version of conceptual art or a take on textiles. And yet, the outcome does look conceptual because our eyes are unable to see the whole world she is touching when she touches a material. Her work is an amazing essay on the insistence of western humanities on general ideas and universal concepts without training the minds, hands and bodies of scholars, thinkers, readers into the interventions needed to spend time on the millions of particulars that do need our action. We learned to write the world as a general text and separate its arguments from the voices and the broken tissues that constitute a more immediate network of storytelling in our life. These broken tissues, carrying the pain of inequality or scarcity, or the pain of a paradox in the system or just the mark of the impossibility of continuing with life, constitute literature, visual arts, cultural theory, mass culture, etc. Miletić's work—through photography, weaving and sculpture—constitutes a personal take on the need to invent a proper medium able to provide an account of the social changes that swept millions of people into the capitalist world and the impact of its rapid transformations. Her work expresses something very humble that contradicts the hubris of modernity: before of thinking to replace the old worlds with the magical appearance of new ones we may need to stop and repair, and confront what is already there. Healing may mean just this: to open the senses and train the gestures to the effort needed to accept the task of building on a damaged world. Modernism's program prefers to replace, to dismiss. No time and no love for the damaged. But we are all damaged. Hana Miletić's practice breaks up human activity—artistic activity—into the task of becoming the agents of looking into the fragments, taking notice of the times, places, languages, materials, and genres that constitute the discipline of repairing. With her work she creates the conditions for a dialogue with the past that general discourses and analytic-dialectical practices do not. Cutting across textures and materials, understanding the physical as a premise of the social spaces we inhabit, she reveals solidarities between the different layers that constitute our experience of the real, but also between art and the ordinary, art and the people.



Her works activate several methods of seeing—the photographic image, the haptic, the hand weaving, the object standing, the work presenting itself, the wall activating a background. But also the colors she uses are very particular, creating some sort of illusion of conceptual centers that resonate with certain histories of art and materials that are linked with a memory of politics. Her works intentionally erase any literal reference to the public space that constitutes their origin. And yet they arrange themselves as a sort of main square with the ambition of touching us and make us create an assembly. Her works intend to create sculptural environments where the perpetual self-critique of past systems gets replaced by the possibility of a self-renewal force emerging from immediate touch and care. Have we really outgrown the dilemmas that arise with the dream of a life in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all? I do not think so. And therefore it is so important to invent through juxtaposing and capturing the material realities of the world with the visceral feeling of acceleration and compression, social conflict, and cultural upheaval that define the current urban and non-urban existence. With its focus on materials, Hana Miletić's work also manages to produce strangely physical dream images and ghostly appearances. Memory politics and the mental environments they create are the focus of her work, motivated by the transformations that originated after the fall of the Berlin Wall, but not only. The contemporary transformation of metropolitan and rural areas worldwide under neoliberal siege and digital triumphalism raises questions about the earlier development of metropolitan experience in its relationship to certain media, industrial production and, today, digital dissemination. The work of Hana Miletić is not interested in bringing any of those past imaginations back to life. She is, above all, interested in the permanent negotiation between the visual, the haptic, the verbal, and the ancestral which was already constitutive of certain abandoned traditions in 20th-century modernism and which has reached a new crescendo in today's exercise of recovering certain feminist art practices. Her work is unapologetically about an artist aware of this genderized way of looking at languages and media, intimacy and space, big and small narratives.



*Mousse Magazine*  
October 11, 2021

# MOUSSE

## Hana Miletić “XX” at LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina

Hana Miletić’s “XX” proposes a series of binary inequalities, sharply delineated and forced into simultaneity, through the work’s marshaling of image, raw material, place, and movement. The unequal relationships drawn together here are distinct yet securely bound in plainly presented interrelation. Beyond the ‘socio-economic’ or ‘geopolitical,’ of which they also are, they encompass the bifurcate experience of human passage, aesthetic hierarchy and material value, and manual and artistic labor. In Basel, Switzerland, which maintains its independence from the EU as part of a pursuit of economic dominance underwritten by nationalist sentiment, Miletić photographed minor repairs in public space, perhaps made by Kosovar or other laborers from the former Yugoslavia, a significant migrant labor population in the region. Woven proxies for these repairs are exhibited in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, a state not only without EU membership but whose very sovereignty remains contested. The converse path also occurs, with textile repairs from the streets of Pristina ushered into the fair in Basel. The steeply disproportionate yet mirrored status of these two sovereigns – outside the EU under starkly uneven terms – provides the foundation for XX’s spate of binaric proportions. For example, in view of this national script, the repairs’ enact the art and craft divide: the handwoven articles teeter between displayed object or unusual household item, delicate relic or grafter tape, and tapestry, farm-house quilt or industrial debris. These separations – between art and craft, low and high material – are situated as maintained by labor hierarchy.

“XX” doesn’t offer or illustrate something as much as enact a series of displacements, which, in their canceling or ‘X-ing’ out of their referent, assume the binary in question while refuting it. Consider the collection of repairs in Basel. These fragile remains copy scenes from granular life in Pristina, partially displacing Basel as the site of current viewership. Are you in Basel, or are you in Pristina, peering at the fine handiwork used to tape a car window back together? In this sense, Miletic has removed the ground of the exhibition you stand in, and the centrality of Basel to its present viewership. At the same time, Basel is excluded but not disappeared, its structural link to Pristina artificially demoted in the autonomous space of “XX”, at this fair. This artificial demotion serves to highlight, as a temporary inversion, the reigning dominant relation of Switzerland to Kosovo and other “economies in transition,” or the UN’s term for the rank of the former Yugoslavia in its annual “country classification,” or development status report. <sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that the UN does not use the name Kosovo in its report, despite supposedly recognizing its statehood.

In a very simple sense then, these “exports” from Pristina indicate but refuse the standard capital flow between developed and so-called “transitional” national economies. The repairs, oddly shaped and at first unplaceable, roughly indicate the textile, raw goods like wool, rubber, and metal, and partially constructed commodities that makeup Kosovo’s small export economy. Indeed, Miletic used unprocessed wool from Kosovo for the durable warp threads in these weavings. What they depict – small jobs culled from auto shops, delivery vehicles, and broken shop windows – incorporates the Kosovar population that lives and labors in Basel, but by bypassing their direct representation. “XX” brings this population into the exhibition space by presenting the relation dictating the value of their labor time – Switzerland as a “developed” nation and Kosovo as “transitional” – rather than an image, or even a direct trace, of individuals, everyday life, or craftwork. Further, the work insists on inaugurating a sense of the spatial reality of Pristina through great but withheld minute detail: specific street corners, moments of tape holding glass or cardboard, or wind ballooning a piece of tarp clinging to the side of a building. This device, in lush temporality, makes embodied an otherwise abstracted bond of economic subordination.

“XX”’s conceptual framework mines the structure of weaving. The Basel and Pristina exhibitions are polar points, integral but opposed, which provide the tense structure for the ‘warp and weft’ constitutive of XX’s overarching meaning. To put this another way, the displacement or exclusion of Switzerland within the Basel exhibition you stand in – overtaken by material and daily rhythm from Pristina – is achieved through employment of this dual structure. Like the warp beneath the weft, Basel isn’t obliterated in the scene of the present exhibition, nor ignored in an attempt to perform the importance of the subordinated state, but excluded while shown in its constitutive interdependence, or as inseparable from its relation to Kosovo. More broadly, “XX” suggests the impossibility of any “developed” economy without that of the “transitional,” breaking both down to another kind of abstract duality (XX), which is contrasted using material evidence, in faithful copies, of the ordinary sameness – yet striking separation – between the two as physical sites.

What of Basel in Pristina? These repairs are of a different color palate, indexing the individual and perhaps municipal routines that attend the minor constructions: in Pristina blue and gray tape predominates, so much so it seems it may be a requirement. In Basel, a diversity of adhesives (light brown, pink, red) suggest a larger consumer market, and perhaps an individual predilection for petty hole filling, as catalogued in the tiny mends on mailboxes and car bumpers in otherwise good shape. Exhibited in Pristina, the Basel repairs unravel, through multiple woven techniques, the façade of Switzerland’s unabridged national script, fraying, by threads drawn from within the state itself, its claim to absolute and unmediated sovereignty. Whereas in the Basel exhibition, Switzerland was excluded from the frame, in Pristina, in a country vying for trade with and recognition from the EU, the repairs centralize a view of the dominant state which depicts it as, although wealthy, fragmented, even unstable, with regard to any claim of national cohesion. Even beyond a critique of Swiss nationalism, what is shown in Pristina is the intangibility of the designation of “developed.” The weavings

speak to an immediate and shared world because the repairs from the two cities are only subtly different; wherein everything ultimately breaks down and must be renewed, and where tape is tape, and thread is thread. Conversely, the change in materials in the textile shown in Pristina – the heavy and small gold weave, like jewelry or currency, and bright pinks and blues – suggest a density and diversity of capital in Basel, casual and indifferent to the conditions anywhere else.

For viewers in Pristina, if we are assuming they are Kosovar which they may not be, it is possible relatives or old neighbors who immigrated to Basel made the repairs copied in textile, which posits another experience of both the geopolitical binary and the individual weavings themselves. To receive Switzerland as always already never itself, as not presently possible in its own narrative – and rather continually dependent on others for its most miniature rehabilitations — is the sight advantage from the “transitional” periphery. From here too, where the main export is labor power, the repairs that return become corporeal: the red and nude colored knit like gauze over flesh, or tiny segments of bright pink intestine roughly wrapped in cotton. The weavings’ handmade-ness – their physicality and organic unevenness – speak to the cost, a ‘pound of flesh,’ of national borders amid global economic competition.

– E. C. Feiss

Ocula Magazine  
July 2021

OCULA

# Hana Miletić: Patterns of Thrift

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE APPROACH

Born in Zagreb, Croatia, and now based in Brussels, Hana Miletić's practice revolves around the act of weaving, which for her culminates in an effect that is both material and metaphorical.

She uses weaving as a gesture of care and repair to reflect on issues relating to social reproduction and ecology.

For her exhibition *Patterns of Thrift* at The approach in London (7 May–26 June 2021), Miletić took inspiration from the history of the gallery's local area in Bethnal Green, which developed as a site for silk weaving from around the mid-17th century before its slow erosion and eventual disappearance in the 20th century.

The works in the show are part of her ongoing series 'Materials' (2015–ongoing). For these pieces, Miletić begins with a photograph, taken by her, of acts of repair in urban space—perhaps of a broken window or damaged car wing mirror—and

recreates these through a process of hand weaving textiles to match the colour, shape, and scale of the original repair. A collection of 'Materials' are also on view at Bergen Kunsthall, where Miletić's solo exhibition *Patchy* opened on 27 May 2021 and runs until 15 August 2021.



Exhibition view: *Patterns of Thrift*, The approach, London (7 May–26 June 2021). Courtesy The approach.

Included is the large-scale woven work *Materials – Arena, Pula* (2019–2020), for which Miletić replicated the covering of a window of the former Arena Fashion Knitwear factory in Pula, Croatia, that she photographed in 2019, using hand-woven and hand-knit textile with repurposed knitwear. Covering two former windows of the Bergen Kunsthall, the work echoes the factory's collapse, acknowledging the impact that this had on its labourers.



Studio Hana Miletić, Brussels (2021). Courtesy the artist.

In this conversation, Miletić joins Diana Campbell Betancourt, the Founding Artistic Director of the Samdani Art Foundation and Chief Curator of the Dhaka Art Summit, to discuss textiles as carriers of migrating connections, engaging the ancestral practice of weaving to relate manifold matters such as care, repair, labour, and multispecies collaboration.

During the conversation, Betancourt and Miletic ruminate more specifically on some examples of the non-violent harvesting of silk in an attempt to answer the question: in a market economy, how is it possible to behave like the living world is an invaluable gift?



Exhibition view: *Patterns of Thrift*, The approach, London (7 May–26 June 2021). Courtesy The approach.

**DCB** We come from very different parts of the world, but we share a passion for thinking about and feeling the world through weaving. To start, maybe we can talk about patterns migrating, and look more specifically at the context where The approach is located.

**HM** For this exhibition, I investigated the history of silk weavers in the gallery's neighbourhood, Bethnal Green. I was looking for ways to ground the works in times when travel is restricted.

The works are all based on repairs that I photograph in public space and then reproduce through weaving. What I would ideally have liked to do is photograph the neighbourhood and then make works based on these photographs.

But as travel has been impossible over the last year, I grounded the works through the history of the neighbourhood where silk weaving was happening from the mid-17th century through the beginning of the 20th century. It was also activated by Huguenot refugees from France, who joined the silk weaving industry in East London.

The title of the show, *Patterns of Thrift*, comes from a quote about these migrant workers, and serves as an acknowledgement for the circulations of ideas and forms across space and time, and how textiles carry these stories.

Some of the research images that I was looking at when preparing the show include historical photographs from 1841, of cottages of silk weavers in Bethnal Green, or drawings depicting female Huguenots; silk weavers preparing silk threads for warping the loom, as well as the actual weaving activity going on.

‘The idea of living and dying together on a damaged earth really resonated with me while making this exhibition and weaving these works using non-violent and repurposed silk, which I then had to untangle to weave or use as raw fibres.’

At that time, silk weavers in the neighbourhood were mainly making ribbons and decorative elements that were used in the luxury industry. They were producing half silks, meaning that they were using silk as warp threads, mixed with other fibres and materials as weft.

I was really drawn to the shapes of these ribbons, which I connect to very easily in relation to the work that I do that reproduces repairs, often using tape. Also, I was already making half silks of sorts, mixing threads from the economy and ecology of my studio to work in a more ethical and also more sustainable way.

The objects I was looking at when preparing the show all come from the Victoria & Albert Museum's textile and fashion collection: an embossed ribbon of woven silk and flattened silver wire from 1855; a belt with a woven brass ribbon from the late 1900s, and a folding needle case from 1760, which is woven in gold silk.

The shapes of my works come from the repairs that I reproduce from public space, but I think it's kind of remarkable that there are also formal resemblances with the objects that I just mentioned. I hand-wove half silks for this exhibition, in which I used silk threads, mainly repurposed from sustainable resources.

For instance, within the 'Materials' series (2020), there is a hand-woven textile using gold eri silk, gold metal yarn, and organic hemp to replicate brownish and beige tapes that I photographed on a car wing mirror, and another that uses copper metal yarn, gold eri silk, gold metal yarn, gold-painted recycled wood fibre, old gold metal yarn, organic hemp, pale gold recycled polyamide, and variegated gold organic cotton cord to replicate a repair of a broken shop window.

You can see how the half silks I wove contain silk fibres, but they also contain recycled wood fibres or repurposed polyester threads, amongst others, so there is a variety of different materials.

I also learnt that the weavers' activities stopped because of automation. This was a result of the invention of the Jacquard loom, which was a forerunner of the present-day computer. So for the works in this exhibition, I included patches of automated fabric.

For the bigger works in the exhibition, different elements were assembled using photographs as backdrops, drawing parallels to the usage of 'cartoons': drawings on hard paper or cardboard in 16th- and 17th-century tapestry.

While preparing for this conversation with Diana, I also looked at ribbons and textiles from South and Southeast Asia that were produced at the same time as when the silk weavers were active in Bethnal Green, and which were also brought to London in the period that they were still active in the neighbourhood.



Hana Miletić, 'Materials' (2021) (detail). Courtesy The approach.

‘My thinking of what care and repair mean not only happens formally through reproducing repairs that I find in public spaces, but also thinking about what a multi-species collaboration could look like, when figuring out how to how to work with silk.’

The Victoria & Albert Museum Collection has, for example, silver gilded ribbon from Delhi from 1855, which was brought to London in 1879 by the East India Company as part of the Indian Museum collection, which no longer exists. Its collection was dispersed into different institutions, like the V&A. I want to raise this as it ties into Diana's experience working at the Dhaka Art Summit, particularly the exhibition *A beast, a god, and a line*.



Silver gilded ribbon from Delhi (1855). Courtesy Victoria & Albert Museum Collection.

DCB

*A beast, a god, and a line* was curated by Cosmin Costinas for Dhaka Art Summit 2018, who is a brilliant curator and the director of Para Site in Hong Kong.

This show began when I noticed the presence of regional silos getting in the way of much needed exchange between South and Southeast Asia. As you know, there are different definitions of South Asia. The Harvard definition positions Afghanistan to the West and Myanmar to the East. Other definitions do not include Myanmar. Some include Iran. It's nebulous and in my opinion too limiting of a framework to use externally imposed geographic definitions to understand the complexities of Bangladesh.

When this show started to come about, we were amid the Rohingya crisis. The Muslims in Myanmar—who Myanmar did not want to recognise, who the military was massacring in the south, and who had lived on the land for centuries—were fleeing into Bangladesh, risking their lives in the process.



Exhibition view: *A beast, a god, and a line*, Dhaka Art Summit '18, The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (7 May–26 June 2021).  
Courtesy Samdani Art Foundation.

Many cultures, including the Rohingya culture, predate the political border lines of modern-day nations. And one way to see that is with textiles. Politics can change, religions can change, and languages can change, but weaving patterns change far more slowly. This is something Cosmin talks about in his curatorial practice.

If you start looking at weaving patterns of certain indigenous communities across India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, and Thailand, you can see some similarities, especially with backstrap weaving. Backstrap weaving employs a very portable loom that can be picked up and taken with you if ever you have to migrate.

It's interesting to think about DNA as a form of weaving as well. *A beast, a god, and a line* shows that textiles can carry these codes that perhaps oppressive regimes want to wipe out. The exhibition grew and morphed and brought in different narratives of other socio-political phenomena weaving their way into the region, such as politicised religion. The exhibition travelled from Bangladesh to Hong Kong, Myanmar, Poland, Norway, and then to Thailand.

My mother comes from an island called Guam, which is a U.S. territory, that is less than a four-hour flight from the Philippines or from Japan. It is nowhere near the continent of the United States.

Because of tropical weather and climate change, a lot of objects don't survive, but my mother would tell me that the treasure of the object was knowing how to make it. And we'll get into this a bit later.

Taloi Havini, who showed in the last Dhaka Art Summit is from Bougainville, an island area near Papua New Guinea, spoke to me about how her community would destroy certain structures to have the people weave them again, to make sure that that knowledge was transferred and known and carried forward.

I know you're a carrier of weaving history, so I thought it would be interesting to talk about muscle memory in relation to your practice.

HM Thank you so much for brining in the topic of muscle memory. The practice of weaving runs in my family history, but it's something that I have only learnt about fairly recently.

My maternal great-grandmother was involved in a weaving community. She would go around people's houses in her village and help them set up and warp their looms. But this is family history, which I only know through stories and through a few cloths that we have in the family; I'm not even sure if she wove these herself or they were gifted to her, or whether she was perhaps paid with them.



Family photograph Hana Miletić, Yugoslavia (1989). Courtesy the artist.

Interview Magazine  
May 12 2021

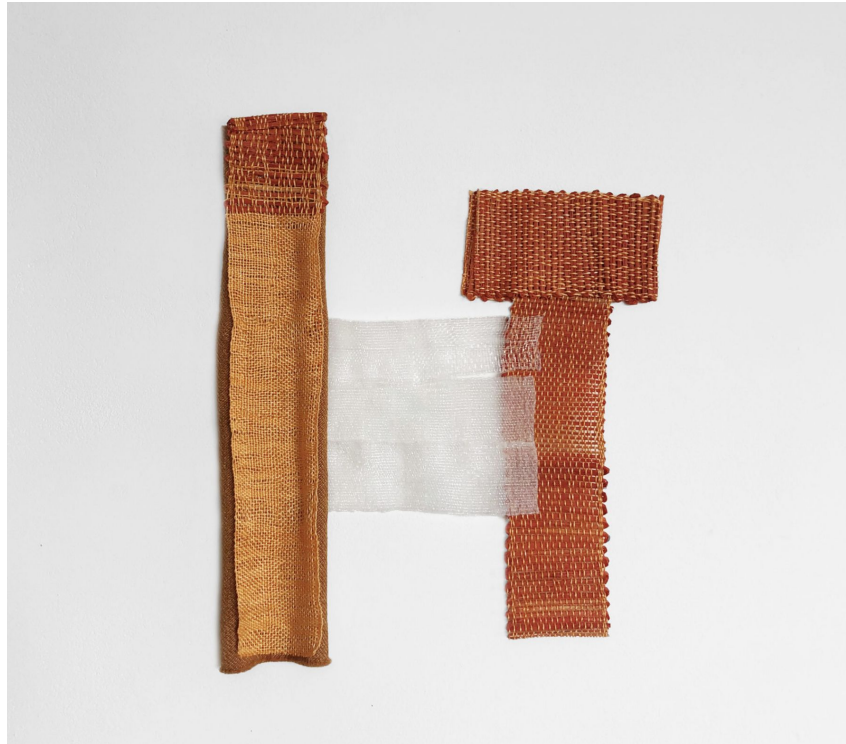
# Interview

ARMCHAIR TRAVELER

## Armchair Traveler: From Berlin to New York and Back Again

By [Louis-Philippe Van Eeckhoutte](#)

May 12, 2021



Hana Miletić, *Materials*, 2021, Hand-woven and Jacquard-woven textile (burnt orange recycled wood fibre, carrot and dahlia- coloured eri silk, dark apricot recycled polyamide, recycled nylon, recycled plastic thread, and white polyester), 11 3/4 x 9 3/8 x 3/4 inches. Hana Miletić, *Materials*, 2021 © The Artist. Courtesy The Artist and The Approach, London.

[Hana Miletić: Patterns of Thrift](#)

The Approach, London

May 7 – June 19, 2021

Brussels and Zagreb-based artist Hana Miletić is presenting new works from her ongoing series “Materials” in her debut exhibition, *Patterns of Thrift*, at The Approach. The abstract-looking textile works from “Materials” find their scale, form, and color from acts of ‘care and repair’ that Miletić has noticed in urban spaces. She takes photographs of makeshift repairs of vehicles and architectural elements, emulating these DIY repairs through a process of hand-weaving textiles. Later this month, Miletić will have a solo show at the Bergen Kunsthall in Norway, where a large work with knitted elements will cover one of the walls, almost as if it were a piece of architecture itself.

Artforum  
January 2020

# ARTFORUM

## CAMERON CLAYBORN AND HANA MILETIĆ WIN 2021 BALOISE ART PRIZE

By News Desk 𐄂

September 22, 2021 4:02 pm

American sculptor Cameron Clayborn and Croatian textile artist Hana Miletić have been awarded the twenty-second Baloise Art Prize. The CHF 30,000 (\$32,500) award is presented annually to artists exhibiting in the Statements section of Art Basel. The Baloise Group, which administers the prize in partnership with the fair, will purchase works by both artists and donate them to the Hamburger Bahnhof–Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, and Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg.

The Zagreb-born Miletić, who lives and works in Brussels and Zagreb, investigates the consequences of political and economic changes, evoked through woven textiles, which she typically creates on a 1970s-era loom, and which are informed by her earlier work as a street photographer. Miletić considers the “slow,” manual process of weaving a way of countering social conditions such as acceleration and standardization. Her project at Art Basel featured recent works from her series “Materials”, 2015–, which focuses on everyday repairs in public spaces, such as those to cars and buildings, reflecting on economic hardship and personal resilience.

Artforum  
January 2020

# ARTFORUM

## OPENINGS: HANA MILETIĆ

Kate Sutton on Hana Miletić

By Kate Sutton ☒



Hana Miletić, *Materials*, 2019, handwoven raw wool and metal yarn, 9 × 7 1/2". From the series "Materials," 2015-.

**IN 1804**, French weaver Joseph Marie Jacquard unveiled an invention that would revolutionize the textile industry: an apparatus that automatically controlled which threads were pulled on a loom, based on information stored on a looping series of punch cards. Intricate fabric patterns previously requiring hours of tedious manual labor could now be produced quickly, efficiently, and at scales capable of meeting the demands of the burgeoning global market. But the Jacquard loom would affect more than just brocade. Famously, the invention also inspired the Analytical Engine, a nineteenth-century prototype of a rudimentary computer developed by Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage. (Noting the similarity of the punch cards used to relay instructions to both machines, Lovelace mused, "We may say aptly that the Analytical Engine weaves algebraical patterns, just as the Jacquard-loom weaves flowers and leaves.")



Hana Miletić, *Materials*, 2019, handwoven cotton and raw wool, 7 7/8 x 9 1/2". From the series "Materials," 2015–.

Hana Miletić mobilizes the gendered associations of weaving to give materiality to processes of care and repair while still attending to the textile's specific affiliation with the digital. Born in Zagreb, in what is now Croatia, Miletić studied archaeology and art history before taking up street photography. In 2001, she relocated to Brussels, where, on a whim, she enrolled in workshops at a collective weaving atelier. She soon discovered that weaving—which, as the artist points out, essentially shares a “back office” with digital photography, in that both systems are predicated on grids—allows for manual manipulations in ways the photographic image does not.

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Miletić discovered that weaving—which, as the artist points out, essentially shares a “back office” with digital photography—allows for manual manipulations in ways the photographic image does not.

Today's automated looms no longer use cards, drawing instead on the digital input of rasterized images. Miletic works on a 1970s-era loom, which repeats specified patterns four times horizontally, generating a kind of contact sheet. While her textiles tend to stay quite small, concealing this effect, the artist has also parlayed the repetition into a series of larger tapestries titled "Softwares," 2018-. To introduce variations and distortions into each copy of the source image, the artist will tug at a random thread, much the same way that Wade Guyton might yank at a canvas as it runs through the printer. Given the high speeds at which the loom operates, this technique allows Miletic to set constraints on the degree of variation, though the actual outcome remains beyond her immediate control.



View of "Hana Miletic: Dependencies," 2018, Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels. Hanging: Softwares, 2018. Photo: Kristien Daem.

Miletić finds a different way to undermine subjective intention in the series “Materials,” 2015–, which has made appearances at many of her recent exhibitions, from the Sharjah Biennial in 2017 and her solo exhibition at Wiels Contemporary Art Centre in Brussels in 2018 to gallery shows at the Approach in London and LambdaLambdaLambda in Pristina, Kosovo, both in 2019. To make these understated collages—often composed of oddly shaped scraps of woven fabric—the artist begins with a photograph. Over the years, Miletić has built up an archive of digital snapshots of makeshift repairs she’s encountered in her day-to-day life, from duct tape sutured over broken taillights to ad hoc windowpanes fashioned from used cardboard. She lifts the irregular shapes of these patch-up jobs as ready-made models for her weavings and siphons her color palettes from the overall compositions of the original images; the result are the decidedly non-duct-tape shades of forest green, bleached strawberry, and Jaffa orange. In one 2019 work from the series, a strap of green and teal surges up in a stubby vertical, then careens horizontally, before swooping down and back to the vertical axis to inscribe an oblong *P*. Another from the same year suggests the mark of Zorro, fattened up and smushed onto a thick kebab skewer. Here, the fabric is tightly woven in silvery tones and reads like the surface of a metal colander.



Hana Miletić's felt workshop, Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels, May 12, 2018. Photo: Anna Van Waeg.

If in “Materials” Miletić brings images of the street into the studio, in other works she takes the studio to the streets. In 2018, the artist contributed to “The New Local,” a joint project by the curatorial platform Precarious Pavilions and the performing-arts center Kaaithheater sited on the open square of Brussels’s Muntplein/Place de la Monnaie. Participants were urged to reflect on the cut-and-paste character of public art. Miletić’s piece took the form of soft architecture, consisting of a fabric woven with a checkerboard pattern suspended from a simple metal frame. At first glance, the structure looks like a portable voting booth or one of those changing rooms on tony beaches. Inspecting it more closely, one sees that Miletić has left the internal sections of each square partially unbound. The threads hang in gauzy, anchored curtains, neither on nor off.



Hana Miletić, *Softwares (Precarious Pavilion)*, 2018–, Jacquard-woven textiles. Installation view, Muntplein/Place de la Monnaie, Brussels. Photo: Cillian O'Neill and Stine Samper.

Though emphatically situated in real space, the object, titled *Softwares (Precarious Pavilion)*, 2018–, also points toward the virtual realm of the digital. The checkerboard pattern, woven from white polyester and gray cotton, implies a grid—high modernism's tabula rasa of utopian possibility—while the grayscale patterning specifically evokes Adobe's "transparency grid," the sapless flesh underlying the skin of PSDs, PNGs, and TIFFs. Cut something out and you will find this grid filling the hole. Its presence signals not only absence but also possibility, an indiscriminate invitation to patch in the cover of new content.



View of "Hana Miletić: Incompatibilities," 2019, Approach, London. Photo: Damian Griffiths.

*Softwares (Precarious Pavilions)* actualized this invitation by readily hosting poetry readings and sound performances by other artists. Miletic had previously experimented with other forms of production that encourage collectivity. In 2017, she was tapped to lead a yearlong workshop at Globe Aroma, a cultural center in Brussels aimed at integrating new arrivals into the city. Noting a gender disparity in previous years' programming, Miletic oriented her workshop specifically toward women. She first formulated a series of collaborative poetry-writing sessions, but they were quickly bogged down by language barriers. One participant, Salome Grdzelishvili, a Georgian émigré, proposed convening through another format: felting. Thought to be one of the oldest (if not *the* oldest) textile, felt requires community—demands it, even—as multiple hands lather and knead wet raw wool into a solidified mass. Workshop participants started to anchor their poetry compositions in conversations about the colors they were using. The resulting multilingual poem, “txt, Is Not Written Plain,” conjures a palette of “yellow white / like the hair of my grandmother / who smokes,” “dirty pink colours” of “Indian old roses,” and “Earth brown like your hands today, / in small contrast with the brown / dotted, Merino wool shirt you / wear.”

The experience and its immersion in color connected the artist to the legacy of her grandmother, who was a weaver. (Miletic harbored warm childhood memories of learning to knit and of dipping Easter eggs in dyes distilled from onion skins.) For the past two years, the artist has experimented with making her own dyes from red beets, berries, and even avocados, whose pits beget an unlikely pink hue, akin to red-wine stains after one cycle in the wash. The emphasis on color has begun to announce itself in Miletic's captions, where the very specific titles of her materials—“ash grey elastic mohair,” “platinum mercerised cotton,” “indigo coloured polyester,” “cream cottolin”—hint at textile-trade histories.



Hana Miletic, *txt, Is Not Written Plain (Draft IV)*, 2018–19, mixed media. Installation view, 2019, TextielMuseum, Tilburg, the Netherlands. Photo: Josefina Eikenaar.

Miletić would focus on one particular case study for “Incompatibilities,” a series that debuted at her eponymous 2019 solo show at the Approach in London. As part of Yugoslavia, the artist’s hometown of Zagreb had once been the seat of a thriving textile industry. Today, the few factories that survived the general bungling of postwar privatization angle their wares toward the export market, offering only an extremely limited selection of their colors locally. However, yarn whose pigments are, for whatever reason, deemed “incompatible” with the standard is bundled up in bags and peddled at discounted prices. Miletić collects these bags and systematically empties their contents, weaving monochrome patches of each of these deviant hues, which she then pieces together in a kind of color-block collage. The artist purposefully leaves the seams of each section rough, so that the sutures take on a sculptural presence.

Her London show opened the day before Brexit’s intended October deadline (which promised to wreak havoc on markets both home and abroad), and the significance of this timing was not lost on the artist. After all, Miletić’s work springs from the ferment that led to Brexit: a world in which the local and the global have collapsed irrecoverably. Yet as Miletić demonstrates, these conditions need not lead to crisis. Instead, by proactively finding moments of productive intersection—the points where a grandmother’s homemade-dye recipe meets the hypermobile abstraction of the grid—we can tease out moments of communion, care, and collective possibility.

*Kate Sutton is coeditor of international reviews for Artforum.*

*Mousse Magazine*  
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# MOUSSE

Hana Miletić “Retour au travail” at La Maison de Rendez-vous, Brussels



Hana Miletić “Retour au travail” at La Maison de Rendez-vous, Brussels, 2019.  
Courtesy: the artist, Lambda/Lambda/Lambda and La Maison de Rendez-vous, Brussels. Photo: Isabelle Arbus

The central floor piece has the look and feel of a domestic carpet. Curiously, it carries a text—a three-letter combination that is repeated three times. RAD RAD RAD, it says, followed each time by enough white space to evoke a pause between the words. At first sight the information ends there, but the brain is always looking for patterns that create meaning. The rhythmic recurrence of the letters suggests that it may be a mantra or a code that unlocks a secret doorway or message when spoken out loud. To “read” a textile also means engaging our sense of touch, in order to unravel how it was made. The tufts of wool, varying in length and shade, are irregularly embedded in carpet, marking the involvement of more than one hand. The choice of handicraft and collaborative labour ties the piece to a specific tradition; it represents a return to work before the age of industrial reproduction.

About five years ago, Hana Miletić shifted the focus of her practice from photography, performance and found poetry to weaving, thereby reconnecting with a craft from her childhood. She was born in the former Yugoslavia, during a period when its textile industry was strong and mostly state-owned. After its breakup in the 1990s, about which time the artist moved from Croatia to Belgium, many textile factories were dismantled and privatized in order to sell their real estate. Miletić returned to this moment of personal and social disruption and went looking for producers still in operation. She came across Regeneracija (“Regeneration”), a pile-carpet factory founded in the 1950s in Zabok, near Zagreb—one of the few that survived the war and its ruinous effects. Since the 1970s, the factory has often invited artists to collaborate with their craftswomen/men—a commitment they extended to Miletić in order to manufacture this unique carpet.

More than a decorative object, the piece presents itself as a visual, soft- surfaced poem. RAD means either “work” or “labour” in the artist’s native Croatian. It is the only legible part of the carpet’s backing material: a white industrially produced canvas carrying the name of the contracting company, TA-GRAD. Miletić spotted the branded tarpaulin while walking in Zagreb, where it covered the façade of a building undergoing construction. Finding in it a receptive, readymade base, she brought the protective fabric to the factory, where it was perforated with wool under high pressure, all the while ensuring that a significant part of the logo remained visible. This technique, known as hand- tufting, is commonly used for producing domestic carpets. By appropriating this found urban material, Miletić overturned its language, location and function, shifting the emphasis from commerce to care; vertical to horizontal; and public to private.

The wood-panelled rooms of the house are punctuated with a series of smaller handwoven textiles. Titled Materials, they appear more autonomous, combining seemingly abstract forms with tactile textures. Miletić modelled them on her own snapshots of broken architectural elements or car parts— mirrors, headlights and windows—creatively taped back together by their owners. Her particular attention to these temporary, improvised “quick fixes”, occurring in the margins of city life between Brussels and Zagreb, is an expression of her interest in the wider conditions of damage and neglect, and how we as individuals deal with them. By going beyond mere representation, and actually reproducing these protective interventions through the laborious process of handweaving and her inventive, pictorial use of materials, Miletić offers her own dedicated gestures of repair and reimagination.

Caroline Dumalin

artnet  
September 30 2019

artnet

From Paul Thek's Accidental  
Etchings to Gabriel Kuri's Cigarette  
Butts, Here Are 5 Must-See Shows in  
Brussels

**Hana Miletić at La Maison Rendezvous**



Installation view of Hana Miletić's "Retour au travail" at La Maison Rendez-Vous. Courtesy Lamdalamdalamda and the artist. Photo: Isabelle Arthuis.

Early this year, four emerging international dealers founded a time-share in Brussels to bring their distinct programs to the city at the center of the European Union. Called La Maison de Rendez-Vous, the venture has set up shop in a stunning, 19th-century apartment that feels grand yet homely, far from a white cube. It's therefore quite appropriate for the four art dealers—Lulu of Mexico City, Misako & Rosen of Mexico City, Park View/Paul Soto of Los Angeles, and LambdaLambdaLambda of Prishtina, Kosovo—who are each known to have curatorial-driven programs.

For this year's Brussels Gallery Weekend slot, LambdaLambdaLambda presents "Retour au travail," an exhibition of Brussels-based, Croatian artist Hana Miletić's intricate and bright textile works. Charming and quietly political, Miletić's tight abstract weavings are from her ongoing series "Materiale." She has collaborated with specialists drawn from craft and industrial textile backgrounds. Previous iterations of the works were included at her solo show at the WIELS Contemporary Art Center on the outskirts of Brussels last year and in the Sharjah Biennial in 2017.

The show's title recalls the stoical mood of workers after a strike, demonstrations, or other industrial action. A floor piece, called *RAD (Work)* ("rad" translates to "work" in Croatian) represents a concern for working class communities. The minimally-designed carpet features the word she spotted on a woven tarp that the artist found in Zagreb. It is part of a series of carpets she has developed with a Croatian carpet factory, one of the few that did not shutter after the break up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. "Retour au travail" conjures the sense of a return to normalcy—but everything is changed and nothing will be the same.

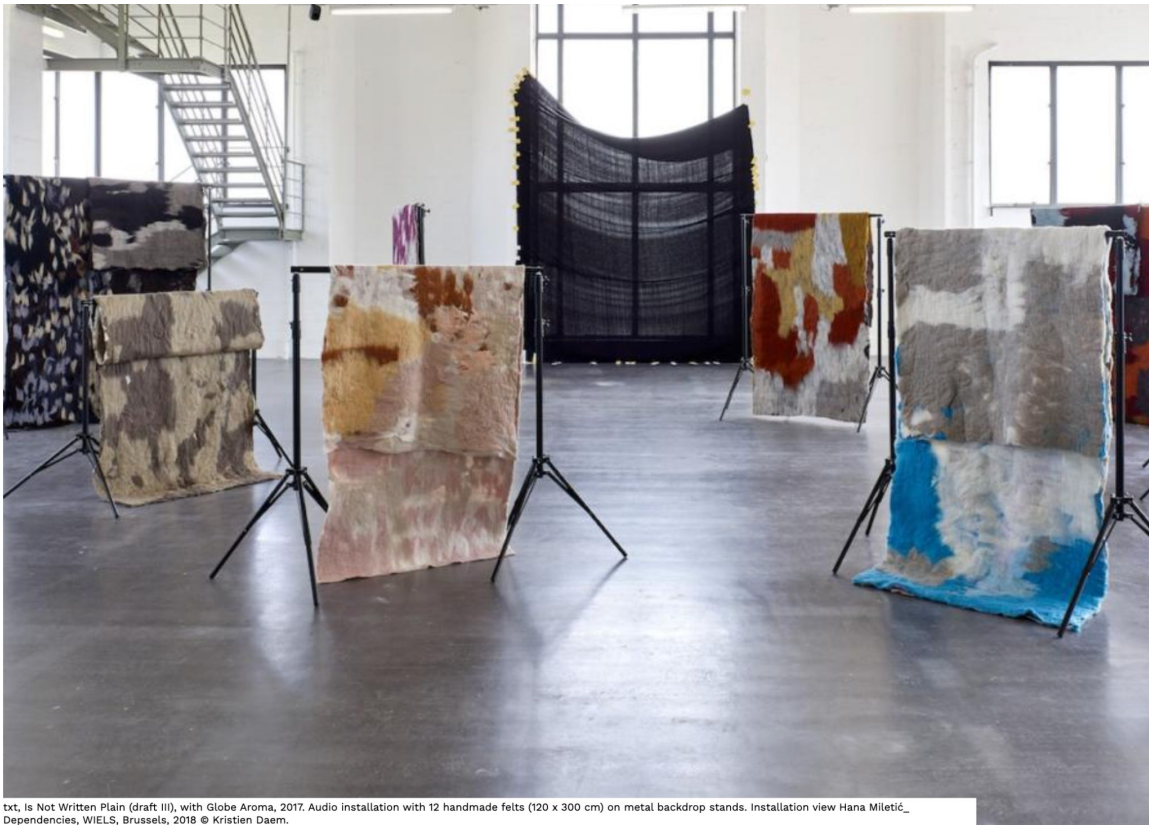
*"Hana Miletić: Retour au travail" is on view from  
LambdaLambdaLambda at La Maison Rendez-Vous, Avenue Jef  
Lambeaux 23, 1060 Saint-Gilles, Belgium, September 5–October 19,  
2019.*

*Blok*  
September 5 2019

# **b l o k**

## From Automation to Households, and Back. Hana Miletić in Conversation

Romuald Demidenko



txt, Is Not Written Plain (draft III), with Globe Aroma, 2017. Audio installation with 12 handmade felts (120 x 300 cm) on metal backdrop stands. Installation view Hana Miletić\_ Dependencies, WIELS, Brussels, 2018 © Kristien Daem.

Hana Miletić is a Zagreb-born and Brussels-based artist whose work is comprised of tactile installations, encompassing textiles, and photographic research, amongst other forms.

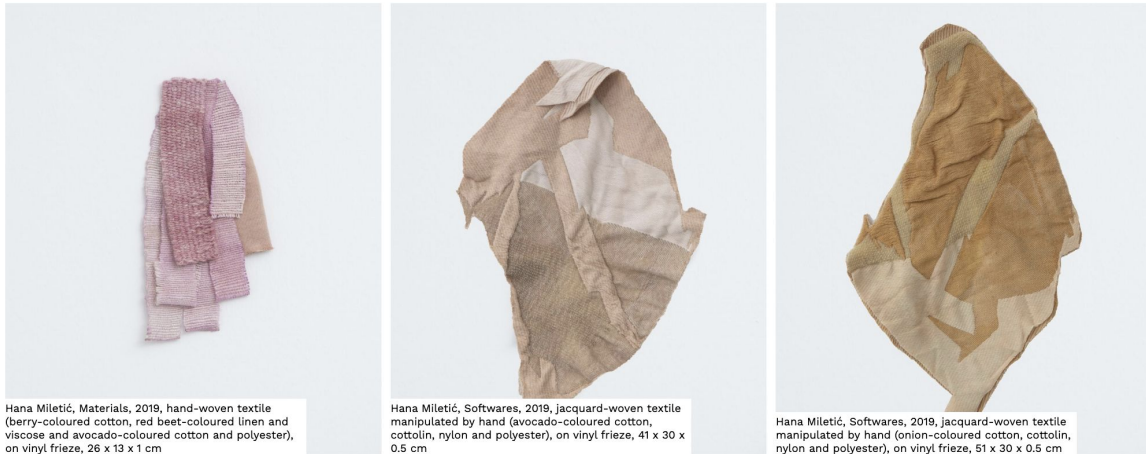
Her works are often made in collaboration or in dialogue with other artists and non-artists. For example, one recent work resulted from a series of workshops conducted over a year. The workshops explored the relation between language and craft and were conducted with a group of women in the community arts centre Globe Aroma in Brussels. This work, alongside other works by Miletić, were presented last year at WIELS Contemporary Art Centre in Brussels in the framework of Dependencies, the artist's first major solo exhibition.

This interview was made one week before the opening of her solo show *Materiale* at gallery LambdaLambdaLambda in Prishtina, Kosovo. I met Hana on a misty morning at her studio in Uccle, uptown Brussels. Half of the space of her medium-size studio is occupied by a big loom, which produced some of her recent textile works. We spoke about the samples of work that hang on the walls of her studio and about her photographic background, which resurfaces in these textile works. When you zoom in, you can notice that through the grid of zeros and ones the patterns of the textiles resemble digital photographic images. But there are glitches, which come from the translation from one medium into another, which create skin-like folds. Her work testifies to the fact that contemporary art is and should be tactile. The objects that Miletić creates are almost asking to be caressed.

Romuald Demidenko: Your practice is often described as originating from the medium of street photography even though most of your works that I have seen are not photographs but rather textiles and text. Can you describe the topics you are currently working on?

Hana Miletić: I am currently preparing for my solo exhibition *Materiale* at LambdaLambdaLambda in Prishtina. The work I am going to present there will be based on photographs that I took in the streets. As a matter of fact, I studied Photography in art school, and before that Archeology and Art History. The photographs that I used to take, and still do, were made in a snapshot-like manner, very quickly. This came very easily to me, and because this process was so direct, I became very confused by what I was doing. My mind couldn't catch up with my eyes, so to speak. On top of that, I struggled with the fact that reproduction in photography is a scientific process from which you are quite detached. After learning about the value of social reproduction, these two forms of reproduction, the reproduction I knew from photography and society, seemed miles apart. I think that due to that intractability my work became less and less photographic. This culminated in 2015 during the Young Belgian Art Prize exhibition in BOZAR, where I staged a series of poetry readings. While that was going on, the young hip-hop band La Frénétick, whose lyrics the poetry was based on, was making a record in

the music studios of BOZAR. I was organizing and producing, or maybe even curating, the whole event. At that point, my work was almost immaterial and mainly conceptual.



I struggled with that transition and developed the desire to touch materials again, to work less conceptually. And then, just by accident, I enrolled in a community weaving class in Brussels. These classes take place in a big, shared studio space where people from different generations make textiles. At some point, I started taking the photographs that I had taken on the streets with me to weaving class, and I started reproducing the forms and colours in the photographs. I was mainly photographing ephemeral materials in public space whose purposed was to protect buildings or to cover them. I had already gathered a small archive of these kinds of images. The materials in the images show certain transformations and scarcities, but they also document gestures of care. I got really interested in this multiplicity, because when looking at these images, you understand certain economical and social processes in the city.

As already mentioned, I started translating these images into woven structures. Weaving and (digital) photography share the same grid of binary zero's and ones as their metadata or back end. Through weaving, I have learned that you can manipulate and stretch that grid. This is the moment when I understood that I could have access to reproduction in ways that I didn't have before.

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The preparations for your solo exhibition *Dependencies in WIELS* overlapped with the final stages of your participatory project at *Globe Aroma, txt, Is Not Written Plain*. Could you tell us more about that project?

Maybe it's interesting to first explain what *Globe Aroma* is. *Globe Aroma* is a community arts centre for newcomers in Brussels. It is a place for people who want to engage in creative activities while spending time together. They do not necessarily have to have artistic ambition. The notion of who is a newcomer is taken in a broad sense, which creates a diverse social mix. *Globe Aroma* tries to create a network through which newcomers can get to know (fellow) artists and other art professionals, and in their spaces people can develop new skills or pick up their past practices – something that can be very challenging when arriving in a new place. Every year *Globe Aroma* invites an artist who has a more secure social position at the time of the invitation and has a background, or some affinity with what it means to be a newcomer. This artist is asked to devise a year-long project which allows people that use *Global Aroma's* spaces to participate. In 2017 I was invited.

When I first visited *Global Aroma* I remarked that mainly men used the spaces. The participants were less diverse than I anticipated. This triggered me to make a program for women only. Also, I wanted to build a group that could work in the arts centre longer than the year-long project, and I wanted the arts centre to take gender diversity into account throughout all of their programming. These protocols were well received by *Globe Aroma* because I wanted to address the same issues that they had also faced, but hadn't yet dealt with due to time constraints and the precarious nature of their work. *Globe Aroma* has an amazing community outreach, thanks to which we were able to form a core group of 15 women, almost all with different nationalities.

The work with that group of women during the year-long project at *Globe Aroma* was based on the overlap between language and textiles. What were your expectations at the start of the project?

I had this, in retrospect, ridiculous idea that we would write poetry together. This idea grew out of my own experience with language as a newcomer in the 1990s, when I was in a similar situation as the women I was working with. When you are an immigrant it is immediately clear to you that learning the language of the country you have arrived to is super important because this might grant you a residence and/or working permit. After that you have to use language on a daily basis to prove your existence in the new country. I really felt it was necessary to take down the notion of language as such, and to work with it differently with the

women. At the end of the day, language is a sort of material, something that you can take and manipulate. So as a group we started to playfully work with language. From the start we were dealing with the vast number of approximately 18 languages – more languages than nationalities.

During these workshops the women learned about my love of textiles. At that time, I was already weaving for a few years, and I had just had a show in Beursschouwburg during which I presented to the public my first ever textile works. Also, it turned out that one of the women in our group, Salome Grdzelschvil, originally from Georgia, has an expertise in wool felting. This is Salome's craft, which she was so generous to share with us. Salome taught the group how to work with wet felting, a very accessible process. Felt is the first man-made material. You just need soap, water and your hands to make plucks of wool bind together.

After a while we decided to intersect the writing sessions with the wool felting sessions. Our weekly meetings were always held around a big table on which we either wrote or felted, always together in group.



Felt workshop, with Globe Aroma, WIELS, Kunstefestivaldesarts, Brussels, 2018 © Anna Van Wael



Hana Miletic, Softwares, 2018, jacquard-woven textile (white polyester, white cotton, white cottolin, gray cashmere and black cashmere), 200 x 140 x 0.5 cm



Dependencies – Charles Samuel, Van Humbecq memorial, Science as a veiled muse, Brussels (black mercerised cotton, black cottolin, white and yellow cottolin), 2018. Hand-woven textile, 400 x 300 cm. Installation view



Dependencies – Konzum supermarket, Zagreb (white cottolin, red, cottolin, cream cottolin, metal, royal blue cottolin and cobalt coloured viscose and silk), 2018. Hand-woven textile, 420 x 1050 cm. Installation view

At some point, we started writing about the textiles that we were making. In the group we would make colour lists based on the felted pieces, and with these lists we would write poems in smaller groups or individually. To give an example, the poem *Negro Is Not A Colour*, written by Shilemeza Prins, was developed in this way. This poem was sparked by discussions that the group had about the word negro, and whether this word could be used to describe a colour. By focusing on the making process of the felt and the colours of the wool we worked with, we reflected on many things, like race or territory. At the end of the project we made an installation of twelve big pieces of felt accompanied by a sound piece, in which the women read their poems.

I want to ask you about the photographic tripods on which the felts are draped, as they resemble the carpet hangers of the housing estates in Poland, where I grew up in late 1980s and early 90s.

I think I see what you mean: metal frames found outside, next to apartment blocks that people use to air and clean their carpets on, because the majority of Eastern Europeans live in apartments and don't have private outdoor space like yards or gardens. This is not where the idea came from, but I know them well from the same kind of estates in Southeastern Europe where I grew up.

In studio photography these tripods are used to hang backdrops on while shooting portraits or still life images. When we started to build up the exhibition of our work in the spaces of Globe Aroma, where it was shown for the first time before going to WIELS and other exhibition spaces, it turned out that the exhibition room at Globe Aroma was not well insulated, unfortunately. We were dealing with roof leaks so we had to come up with an installation that was moveable, hence the use of tripods. I had tripods in my studio that I had kept from my photography practice. We tried draping the felts over them and this worked very well, so we decided to keep the tripods. Through the use of tripods the installation formally came closer to my more individual art practice.

In the press release for your solo show at WIELS the practice of handwork by women in your family during your childhood in Zagreb, former Yugoslavia is mentioned. Can you elaborate a bit on this experience and its influence on your current practice as presented in some of your recent exhibitions?

In my family there is a long tradition of working with textiles. My great grandmother was also a weaver, but unfortunately she died when I was very young without passing on her skill. I remember that I learned a lot of different handwork techniques like crochet, knitting or embroidery as a kid with my grandmothers and my mother. This didn't include weaving though. In my family's photo album there is even a picture of my grandmother, my niece and myself plucking raw wool for further production, like felting. I guess that I kept the muscle memory of these handwork techniques, but I never imagined that they would one day become part of my art practice. When I started to weave, the gestures I learned immediately brought me back to these memories.

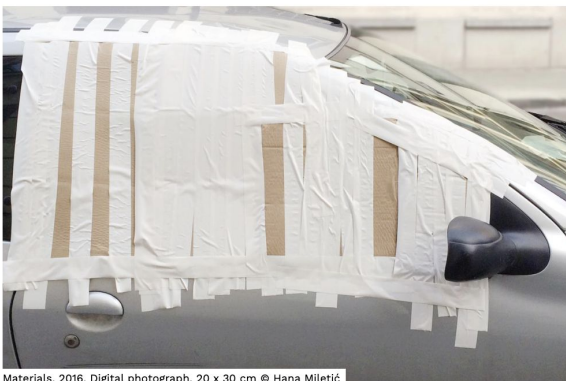
Weaving is done with a machine, the loom. Looms were initially operated by hand in households and smaller communities. With industrialisation, looms became automated and moved from homes to factories. The loom is not only the forerunner of a computer (hardware), but writing code (software) was also developed through the experience of weaving.



Materials by Hana Miletić, installation view, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, 2019



Materials (platinum mercerized cotton, gunmetal grey cotton and black cotton), 2016. Hand-woven textile, 80 x 60 cm. Installation view Hana Miletić\_ Materials, Beursschouwburg, Brussels, 2016 © Bram Tack



Materials, 2016. Digital photograph, 20 x 30 cm © Hana Miletić



Materials (platinum mercerized cotton, gunmetal grey cotton, yellow mercerized cotton and yellow cotton), 2016. Hand-woven textile, 400 x 400 cm. Installation view Hana Miletić\_ Materials, Beursschouwburg, Brussels, 2016 © Bram Tack

The text 'The Future Looms, Weaving Women and Cybernetics' by Sadie Plant traces these transformations of the loom through the organization of female labour. Plant recalls, amongst others, Ada Lovelace who was never credited fully for her developments as the assistant of Charles Babbage.

I understand weaving and the work on the loom as something that is strongly connected to technology. This is twofold, because besides being aware that one came from the other, I also think that textiles that were produced on a loom have a very specific tactility, very different than the touchability of devices like pads or phones that use same or similar technology. There's an interesting glitch between what this hardware and software can produce. This is what I'm trying to introduce in the exhibition, Prishtina, when dealing with a combination of automation and handwork.

Can you tell me more about the most recent work presented in your upcoming exhibition at LambdaLambdaLambda?

To produce the works for this exhibition, of which the majority is brand new, I've used a mix of automated and manual weaving techniques. By doing so, I wanted to connect to a number of regional traditions. It will be my first time in Kosovo, but I have spent my childhood in a very similar part of Europe, where there is a comparable ethnographic tradition on the one hand, and on the other hand a more recent tradition of textile industry, and its painfully swift decline. In the region of former Yugoslavia, after the civil wars, almost all textile factories were privatized and closed. The close downs resulted in many people, mostly women in their 40s and 50 years of age, losing their jobs, left with little opportunities on the job market. By using automation and handwork to produce my new works I want to bridge these traditions in space and time.

Materiale, which is a title of your show in Prishtina, speaks of your method of working and of the weaving process.

Yes, I often use a printout of the photograph that I want to weave while working on the loom. This method resembles the traditional method of making tapestries, with sketches or cartoons that were placed behind the looms and weaving frames. When I work with an automated or Jacquard loom, I translate the pixels of the photographic image into binds of horizontal and vertical threads. This is a different way of approaching reproduction. Here it doesn't happen by hand but it is transmitted through coding. The Jacquard loom that I use has a funny function. It repeats an image, or a rapport in more technical terms, four times next to each

other because this loom was built to weave patterned fabrics in an economical and efficient way. It was mainly used to produce textiles for households, like curtains, in the 1960s and 70s. I appropriated the form of this repeated rapport to produce woven works that look a bit like photographic contact sheets in which a negative is printed multiple times.

These recent works depict repeated and automated images but also show irregularities. While the textiles are being woven I pull at them in order to distort the normative logic of the grid and to stress the importance of the body in the automated production process.

I also want to ask you about the spatial work that you presented last year in a centrally located public square in Brussels, Place de la Monnaie/Muntplein. The pavilion-like structure with its characteristic grey and white checkerboard looked like an intriguing object. Quite often I visit the library on that same square, Muntpunt, to work there with my laptop, so I got to see some of the projects that were part of the festival almost by accident.

The pavilion you are mentioning was presented as part of the project *Precarious Pavilion* conceived by Michiel Vandevelde, which tries to re-imagine public spaces in different cities. The edition in Brussels, entitled *The New Local*, was curated by Lietje Bauwens and Wouter De Raeve, and – as you mentioned – took place in the centrally located square of La Monnaie or De Munt. Lietje, Michiel and Wouter wanted to research how this square could be used differently. They were not necessarily interested in putting physical things on the square because that is what the city does all of the time through various city branding projects. During the day different things happened on the square without being announced, hence why you discovered them by accident.

The title of the overarching project, *Precarious Pavilion*, intrigued me, and I actually really wanted to put something physical on the square, despite the different invitation. The title inspired me to create an actual pavilion, with walls made out of porous fabric, and a structure that is temporary, mobile and light.

The square as a location is very interesting. It is formed by strong markers such as the newly renovated shopping centre called The Mint, the city's central administrative centre and the opera building. This square is delineated by institutions that project legality and/or trigger consumerism, while the square itself is a vast open space, a blank canvas for city marketers.

In my exhibition in WIELS, I showed the same grey and white checkerboard pattern in a installation that filled the room. The pattern could be seen in relation to the Blomme building's modernist floor tiles. The pattern references at once Photoshop's transparency grid but at the same time a weaving draft. It renders visible, but also supports the (re)production of images through the means of photography and weaving, the two media that I work with. After making that installation I wanted to take that grid off the wall and weave it as fabric. I wove the textile for the pavilion on the already mentioned automated Jacquard loom, which is considered to be a precursor to the first computer and acknowledged as an indispensable tool in the development of early software. In order to distort the binary and serial aesthetic of the grid this time I didn't pull at the fabric during production, but I decided to produce a partly unbound fabric.

I guess that I was looking how to make a space that is at the same time also an image, and how to make a fabric that is translucent but still can be protective in a way. There are many things that I think fabric can do while acting as a wall – I think. I wanted to use these pliable walls to create a temporary space within an existing space. When I made that space I wanted to activate it so I invited the group of women that I had worked with at Globe Aroma to the pavilion. After our felting and writing workshops the women wanted to keep doing things together so they initiated a group that meets on a regular basis – I think that this is the most beautiful thing that grew out of our project. One of the things that the women do during their meetings is that they make music together. I invited them to activate the pavilion by performing singing exercise inside of the space.



Softwares (white polyester and grey cotton)  
temporary pavilion with Jacquard-woven textile  
manipulated by hand, 200 x 300 x 300 cm. Vocal  
performance by LadyVines. Precarious Pavilion, The  
New Local, Muntplein \_ Place de la Monnaie, Brussel



Softwares (white polyester and grey cotton)  
temporary pavilion with Jacquard-woven textile  
manipulated by hand, 200 x 300 x 300 cm. Precarious  
Pavilion, The New Local, Muntplein \_ Place de la  
Monnaie, Brussels © Hana Miletic



Hana Miletic, Softwares, 2019, jacquard-woven textile  
manipulated by hand (white polyester, cream cotton,  
beige cotton, vanilla cottolin, gold wool-viscose and  
silk and silver wool- viscose and silk) on vinyl frieze,  
400 x 140 x 0.5 cm

My first experience with your work happened shortly after I moved to Brussels in 2016, during your solo exhibition *Materials* at Beursschouwburg Brussels, a Flemish institution dedicated to music, performative and visual arts with a diverse audience. *Materials* was not a regular exhibition of works presented in a space but rather a collaborative public program. How did you come up with this idea of inviting other artists?

When an institution invites you for an exhibition there are certain expectations of how you should behave at the institution. I guess that at Beursschouwburg I was trying to use the institution a bit differently than what I was invited for. This came out of my thinking for the project at BOZAR where I was staging daily poetry readings in an exhibition space while the young hip-hop group that I was working with was recording in a space that the audience didn't have access to. As I already said, after doing this work at BOZAR I wanted to work again more with material mediums. When I got invited for the show at Beursschouwburg I had already started weaving.

For *Materials* I decided to show my woven textile works for the first time in public. I also wanted to implement the idea of weaving metaphorically into Beursschouwburg's larger program. And that's how this collaborative public program came into being which ran parallel to my exhibition. I imagined it as something that made sense in connection to the exhibition but also as something that might be necessary to interweave in Beursschouwburg's larger program. The program contained, amongst others, a reading group, a DJ workshop for women and a workshop on reading feminist sculpture in public space. To organize this spatially I presented my work in the hallways and staged the public program in the gallery space because that space offered the intimate and focused environment that was needed for the program.

I appreciated the fact that your presentation attempted to address institutional boundaries as well as play with the idea of exhibition making itself. How would you define what happened there in terms of individual-group exhibition definitions?

I was invited to have a solo show, and I guess that is kind of what I delivered in the end. At the same time, both the institution and myself were interested in unpacking the notion of collaboration, especially connected to the tradition of female collaboration. The parallel public program was a way to activate certain ideas or positions that had gone into the making of the works. For that I invited different people whom I was already working with, like the reading and writing group *Knowledge Is a Does*, and people with who I wanted to work with. All of us were exploring collaborative work from a feminist tradition.

Lastly, an interesting addition to this exhibition was the accompanying text that was written collaboratively. Can you tell us a bit about the writing process?

I had invited Knowledge Is a Does, the reading and writing group that I have been a part of since 2014, to write a text for the exhibition. This text wasn't about the exhibition but explored similar issues as the exhibition and its parallel public program. We wrote the text for Materials thinking about an interview that we conducted with a group of textile workers from Zagreb, Croatia, who had lost their jobs due to privatization and, by consequence, started their own NGO for sewing services and training. They were, and still are dealing with different notions of collaboration in their practice, something that we tried to connect with in a critical way, being also a group that collaborates on a regular basis.

*Hana Miletić (\*1982), born in Zagreb, is based in Brussels. She studied Photography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam; Art History and Archaeology at the Free University of Brussels; and Gender Studies at Utrecht University. In 2018 WIELS Contemporary Art Centre in Brussels presented her first big institutional solo exhibition. She recently took part in group-exhibitions at the contemporary art museum S.M.A.K., Ghent (2018-19); Metro Pictures, New York (2019); TextielMuseum, Tilburg (2018-19); the 13th Sharjah Biennial (2017) and Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2016). She was a resident at Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht in 2014-15. In 2015, she was awarded the BOZAR Prize in the framework of the Young Belgian Art Prize.*

*e-flux*  
April 26, 2019

# **e-flux Criticism**

## Hana Miletić's "Materiale"

Vincent van Velsen



View of Hana Miletić's "Materiale" at LambdaLambdaLambda, Pristina, 2019. Image courtesy of the artist and LambdaLambdaLambda, Pristina. Photo by Lule Bagta.

**LambdaLambdaLambda,  
Pristina**

March 1–May 4, 2019

Encompassing both surrounding environment and exhibition, tactile transitions define Hana Miletić's solo show at LambdaLambdaLambda gallery. The first work in the exhibition, taken from a series collectively titled "Softwares" (2018–19) and displayed in the gallery's entrance, is made from varieties of gray thread. This "pictorial weaving"—the term Anni Albers used to describe hand-woven artworks rather than fabric for everyday use—consists of a pattern vertically repeated four times.

Roving the streets of her hometown of Zagreb, or her current home of Brussels, Miletić documents found situations and portrays them in her work. One "Softwares" piece, dated 2018, is an abstracted image of a photograph Miletić took of something she saw on the street, a broken car window fixed with tape: the kind of makeshift repair people do when pragmatism is encouraged by financial necessity. Such traces of necessity and care—protection, maybe—are among Miletić's central interests. The shape that defines the pattern of this "Softwares" work is also based, in part, on the machine it was made on: a Jacquard loom. Developed to produce household textiles, the loom's efficient design replicates any given pattern four times. "Softwares" also evidences an artistic process of translation, in which a reparation becomes a photograph, then a pattern, and, finally, a textile. Only the contours of the initial physical situation made it all the way through this process, to its eventual representation in fabric. Material, memory, and reference are rendered in gray.

The same gray can be found in the shadow of history and labor, to which “Softwares” refers. There are the fabrics made by grandmothers, mothers, and daughters: warm blankets, curtains, tapestries, and whatever other tangible comforts are usually taken for granted—the invisible labor that makes for the cushioned backbone of life. The line of household work and female labor plays an important role in Miletić’s practice: in her family, weaving was collectively performed by women. The artist has reconnected with the activity in recent years, sometimes in the context of an all-female group (the works in this exhibition, however, were made by the artist herself). Miletić places important emphasis on the narratives of women in the shadows of men; women created the framework from which men thrived. Specifically, the mechanism that made Charles Babbage better known than Ada Lovelace. Lovelace contributed to the development of Babbage’s Analytical Engine—the first computer, for which the Jacquard loom was a predecessor—with similar binary traits. Vertical or horizontal lines became the ones and zeros embedded in binary code. The working methods of the loom were used to create the code, thus “Softwares.”

Working against binary logic and the erasure of women’s narratives, Miletić’s exhibition creates a space of nuance and alteration. Typically, weaving does not allow for questions: it is straight, either horizontal or vertical. No diagonals, no curves. She explicitly goes against such limited methodologies to create forms of counter-narrative. In the gallery’s second room, the white walls are decorated with a crenellated pattern picked out in gray, three more “Softwares” works, and a 2019 piece from the hand-woven “Materials” series are mounted to the walls. These works’ soft colors reveal the artist’s use of household dying processes (she colors some of her threads using berries, beets, and avocados). In their shape and pattern, which variously

resemble hearts, flower buds, and rugs, the works reveal the modes by which she manually modifies her weavings to adjust their rigid nature—to create some space, some alterations in the straight patterns, adjusting the binaries of left and right, zero and one, black and white, into a gray area of differentiation and non-alignment. In the same way former Yugoslavia and Brussels are zones of cultural and linguistic overlay, Miletić moves outside restricted rules, conformist straitjackets, and wholesale standardization.

Almost a decade ago, Miletić's main medium was photography. Nowadays, it merely informs her broader practice as a source, a visual point of reference that moves toward different mediums. She renders such transitions tactile. Whether these concern medium, language, body, or culture. Similar to her work process and the shapeshifting necessary to move between cities, the transformations in her work process imply continuous adaptations with different outcomes that bear only traces of an initial situation. Photography is thereby translated through the contemplation, travel, time, body, and the loom, into something else: handwoven textiles—less transient, at least as delicate.

FRIEZE  
September 5 2019

# FRIEZE

## Your Guide to Brussels Gallery Weekend

Ahead of this year's edition of the gallery event, the pick of exhibitions to see in town

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BY FABIAN SCHÖNEICH IN CRITIC'S GUIDES | 05 SEP 19

**Hana Miletić, 'Retour au travail'**

La Maison de Rendez Vous

*6 September – 19 October*



Hana Miletić, *Materials*, 2019, hand-woven textile, brown-grey raw wool, golden metal yarn, 25 × 19 × 1 cm. Courtesy: the artist and LambdaLambdaLambda/La Maison de Rendez-Vous; photograph: Isabelle Arthuis

Under the title 'Retour au travail' (Return to work), Croatian artist Hana Miletić presents new works with LambdaLambdaLambda at La Maison de Rendez Vous, an exhibition space run collectively by various international galleries. Miletić's works can be described as far more than sculptures, they rather represent social realities: 'RAD' (Work, 2019), for instance, is a series of handmade carpets she developed in collaboration with the Croatian carpet factory Regeneracija. Founded in the former USSR, Regeneracija is one of the few factories that didn't have to close after the breakup of Yugoslavia. Inspired by their technique of tufting, Miletić added a different layer to the carpets by using found materials such as tarpaulins from construction sites and scaffolding shrouds from the area near Zagreb.

FRIEZE  
July 27, 2018

# FRIEZE

## Hana Miletić: Weaving, Stitching, Pulling At Threads

On show at WIELS, Brussels, the artist's textiles are modes of conscious reparation, through which damage and disrepair become precious artefacts

Two tarpaulins block the view into Hana Miletić's exhibition at WIELS. The larger of the two, a Daniel Buren-esque expanse of red-and-white stripes with a blue cloth tossed over it, is suspended from the ceiling and drags a little on the floor.

*Konzum supermarket, Zagreb* (2018) is one of four large textile pieces from Miletić's 'Dependencies' (2018) series, made from Cottolin, viscose and silk woven on a handloom over a period of ten months. It is not a real tarpaulin, but rather a visual facsimile of one that recently concealed a site in Zagreb while a new branch of the Croatian supermarket chain Konzum was being built. Miletić's version is faithful to the original, down to scruffy patches recreated by pulling threads out of her finished weaving. A second group of mimetic works, from the 'Materials' series (2015–18), translates photographs of improvised car repairs made using brown tape or silver foil into handmade weavings. Hung on the walls beyond the tarpaulins, these fine tapestries exude the pathos of lovingly restored things.

Miletić refers to weaving as a kind of 'care work'; more than just the production of cloth, it doubles as a mode of conscious reparation through which she can process the damage and disrepair she notices in the world into precious artefacts. No longer merely serviceable or disposable like their referents, they are ends in themselves. Yet they also seem to perform an ironic take on the economy of weaving, exchanging modest materials – albeit woven ones like tarpaulins and gaffer tape – for rich ones and trading functionality for aesthetic worth.



Hana Miletić, *txt, Is Not Written Plain (draft III)*, 2017, installation view, 2018, WIELS, Brussels. Courtesy: the artist; photograph: © Kristien Daem

Some works in the exhibition perform a social function. Miletić, who was born in Croatia when it was part of Yugoslavia, has over the past few years developed a practice of collective textile production with a group of women at the arts centre Globe Aroma in Brussels, where she has lived since 2001. Their collaborative work *txt, Is Not Written Plain (draft III)* (2017) includes a score performed by the group in a range of accents and languages. The score occasionally rises to a martial cry before switching to a confessional or playful tone, and is played out in a room populated by a series of handmade felt sheets in which whorls of ochre and grey fibres eddy into splashes of turquoise and coral. In an anthropomorphic setup that suggested a gathering of bodies holding hands, the swathes of felt were draped over pairs of light stands connected at the top by a horizontal bar. Felting, like cooking, is an ancient communal activity and an intensely tactile art, in which pressure applied by the hands compresses fibres together into cloth. Feeling, as per the material's name, is key to this work. The score's instructions for felting and vocal dynamics were laid out beside a text that evoked the process itself – 'I caress patches of colour' – and alluded to the Belgian context – 'black like the first colour of the flag'.



Hana Miletić, *Cosigned Landscape, with Emmy Van de Velde*, 2017, installation view, 2018, WIELS, Brussels. Courtesy: the artist; photograph: © Kristien Daem

In a small room reached by a narrow staircase, the tapestry *Co-signed landscape, with Emmy Van de Velde* (2017) is the outcome of a relationship premised on absence. Miletić picked up the threads of an abandoned textile she found at Anderlecht Academy, introducing variations in the existing pattern and colour. I can only guess at why Van de Velde abandoned her work, but her absence is a poignant reminder of the impermanence at the heart of any relationship. Miletić's textiles, made up of countless individual threads or a multitude of fibres, demonstrate how weaving can help us come to terms with a situation, and maybe on some level even repair the social fabric.

*Hana Miletić, 'Dependencies' runs at WIELS, Brussels, until 12 August.*

Artforum  
Summer 2017

# ARTFORUM

## the Sharjah Biennial

Various Venues

By Murtaza Vali ☞

**AS PART OF** the Sharjah Art Foundation's push to expand its presence into more remote areas of the emirate, recent editions of the organization's signature event have spread beyond its existing facilities to satellite venues across and outside city limits. This year's ambitious Biennial goes a step further, extending the program over a year and dispersing it internationally across the greater region. Titled "*Tamawuj*"—an Arabic word that means "a rising and falling in waves; a flowing, swelling, surging, or fluctuation; a wavy, undulating appearance, outline or form"—the Sharjah Biennial's thirteenth edition, curated by Christine Tohme of Beirut's Ashkal Alwan association, supplements the main exhibition in Sharjah (dubbed "Act I") with four off-site programs. Each of these is organized around a keyword: a symposium on "water" held in Dakar, Senegal, this past January; a set of newly commissioned works about "crops" presented in Istanbul in May; a series of publications on "earth" to be launched in the Palestinian city of Ramallah in August; and a pair of exhibitions (dubbed "Act II"), as well as related public programs centering around "the culinary" in Beirut in October. The expansion seems to have come at a cost: Logos of neoliberal multinational corporations, such as Dubai-based real estate developer Emaar and the luxury brand Van Cleef & Arpels, were prominent on banners and hoardings advertising the otherwise largely government-funded event.

"Act I" is distributed across six distinct clusters, including a new studio building in Al Hamriyah, a sleepy coastal town a half-hour drive north of Sharjah. Waves reappear in very different guises throughout the Biennial, from numerous fabric pieces, many of which are presented in outdoor settings that allow the works to gently undulate in the wind like flags or sails, to a preponderance of works featuring sound waves. Notable among the former are Hana Miletić's abstract handwoven textiles, which range from large curtain-like sheets to smaller sculptural fragments made of thick yarn that resemble cocoons and bandages. Regularly punctuating the courtyard-facing walls at Al Hamriyah Studios, these subtle works evoke notions of nurture and care historically associated with cloth.

*Hyperallergic*  
May 12 2017

# HYPERALLERGIC

## A Poetic Sharjah Biennial for a World in Turmoil

*Tamawuj*, the 13th biennial organized by the Sharjah Art Foundation, is generous and speculative, unfolding into something almost hopeful.



Nat Muller May 12, 2017

SHARJAH, UAE — Expectations were high for Lebanese curator Christine Tohmé's take on *Tamawuj*, the 13th Sharjah Biennial (SB13), organized by the Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF). As co-founder and director of *Ashkal Alwan*, the Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts, Tohmé has been pushing, connecting, initiating, and challenging contemporary artistic productions and critical discourse in Beirut and the surrounding region for more than two decades. Given her outspoken position on matters cultural and political, many were anticipating a hard-hitting curatorial slap in the face. This — to her credit — Tohmé did not deliver. However, she did offer an open, rich, multilayered, and in many ways poetic biennial for a region and a world in turmoil.

That craft can be something deeply transformative is exemplified in an exuberant manner by Abdelkader Benchamma's cave-like site-specific drawing "Neither the sky nor the earth" (2017), which covers the walls and ceiling of one of the Al Hamriyah spaces. There is an incredible amount of detail and movement in Benchamma's black ink and felt-tip pen strokes. They envelop and transport the viewer forcefully. And Hana Miletić's hand-woven textiles, which thoughtfully punctuate the perimeters of the Al Hamriya space, are based on photographs of damage and neglect the artist took of her surroundings, but they translate into tender frayed weaves, beautiful in their intended imperfection. Craft and its economy is also something at stake in Christodoulos Panayiotou's contribution, "Untitled" (2017), which transforms marble crystals into jewelry, performatively taken out of precious jewelry boxes and shown to viewers.