

# JASON MCCOY GALLERY

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## ARTslant New York

April 9, 2012

Christiane Löhr  
by  
Charlie Schultz

CHRISTIANE LÖHR  
Jason McCoy Gallery  
41 East 57th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10022  
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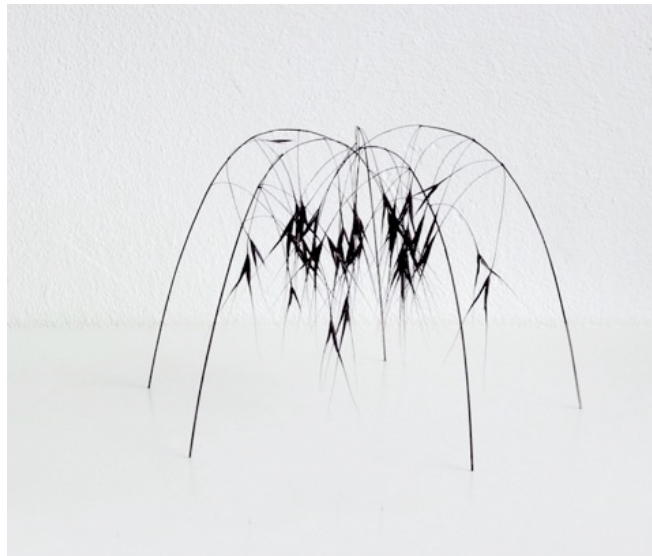


*Durchlässige Form / Permeable Form*, 2012, Tree blossoms, 8 x 12 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Jason McCoy Gallery, NY)

There are times I feel I've forgotten most of what I've seen; and there are moments when art works I never expected to remember—never tried to recall—assert themselves with a lucidity so precise and sudden as to merit, even demand, extended consideration. The German artist Christiane Löhr makes work that, for me, falls into this latter rank. Two years ago I came across one of her sculptures for the first time at the Museum of Art and Design. I didn't know it

was Löhr's work, but when I stepped into her self-titled solo show at McCoy gallery, the image burst upon the screen of my imagination fresh as a spring flower.

Part of this certainly has to do with the peculiar material Löhr works with: horsehair, stalks of grass, tree blossoms, seeds of ivy and thistle. Just as significant is her manner of arrangement. In this exhibition, Löhr's first solo in New York, there are three iterations of the work that so stimulated my memory. Puffy, diaphanous thistle seeds fill a hairnet that is adhered to the wall. These pieces, each appropriately titled *Seed Bag* (2012), take the shape of tear or a mole. The hairnets are practically invisible; so these seeds appear to hang suspended of their own volition, defying gravity. The sense of lightness is as pervasive in Löhr's work as heaviness often is in Richard Serra's core-ten steel sculptures. Each represents an extreme position.



*Kleine Kuppel / Little Dome, 2011, Grass stalks, 13 x 21 x 21 inches*

In addition to the seed pieces, Löhr is showing a number of incredibly delicate sculptures made of similarly natural "found objects." *Big Bow Form* and *Little Dome* (both 2011) feature stalks of plant and grass that have been carefully placed into tiny holes in the surface of a plinth. They protrude from this flat white plane and arc gracefully into one another. How Löhr is able to get this fragile stuff to maintain these elegant curves is not always obvious, which lends the otherwise straightforward works an element of mystery.

A series of drawings in black oil pastel are less impressive or wondrous than the sculptures, though they complement the organic forms of her raw material in a rather succinct way. The half dozen works on paper, all *Untitled* (2011), are consistently composed of dark lines that extend to the paper's edges, winding and bending like branches off a sturdy stem. They are certainly not illustrations; it's the form generated by the line that is paramount. Like her sculptures, these drawings seem most successful when they achieve a certain balance of tension and rest.



*Haarsäule / Hair Column*, 2012, Horsehair, needles, 113 3/4 x 39 1/2 x 39 1/2 inches

Löhr's sense of touch and geometry is evident in all the works, though perhaps most potent in the pieces composed of horsehair. Consider any one of the three sculptures titled *Little Hair Work* (2012); in each, strands of horsehair are looped through the eyes of needles that have been stuck into the wall to create mandala style patterns. These diminutive works are juxtaposed by *Hair Column* (2012), which incorporates the same material but in a scale that dwarfs the body. With strands of hair reaching from the floor to the ceiling, *Hair Column* adds a sense of sturdiness and architectural heft to the fragility of its materiality. It is the only work in the show in which the artist has pulled the hair taut.

Löhr has often said that she is most concerned with the process of giving order to these bits of nature. While the sense of order in a *Seed bag* piece might be best defined as a clustering, the brand of order she imposes on the plant stalks and horsehair is of a more refined and geometric type. Like Andrew Goldsworthy or the lesser-known Chinese artist Cui Fei, a certain harmony emerges out of the new aesthetic relations she creates. There is a sensitivity to the most miniscule interaction between these natural forms that seems a worthy achievement in itself.

—Charlie Schultz