

PRESSBOOK

Tatiana TROUVE

Modern Painters

June 2017



Modern Painters June/July 2017 Margaret Carrigan

HONG KONG

Tatiana Trouvé

Perrotin // March 20–May 17

HAVE YOU EVER HAD THE EDIFICES of your everyday existence suddenly stripped from you? Have you ever been humbled out of house and home by a force that felt infinitely larger than you? It matters not how you come by these losses, whether it be a cataclysmic natural disaster that destroys your residence or a heartrending realization that a romantic relationship is over, forcing you to move out and move on. The effect is always seismic.

Tatiana Trouvé's latest lean-to works can easily be seen as symbolic of the discord,

vulnerability, and even the simplicity you find in the rubble of life gone awry. The Italian-born, Paris-based artist's exhibition "House of Leaves" at Perrotin in Hong Kong features a room full of sculptures fashioned out of bronze, aluminum, and copper that deceptively look like flattened cardboard and scrap metal sheeting propped up by sticks and books. Each roughly four feet in height, you must stoop—inherently a physical act of humility—to look at them closely. Despite intrinsically offering a degree of shelter,

they're only large enough to house a slight person who would probably have to curl up in the fetal position in order to stay entirely covered under their narrow overhangs. Like so many of the structures we rely on, both literal, like the roofs over our heads, and figurative, like the social norms by which we often unconsciously abide, these lean-tos merely gesture toward safety and security. Yet at any moment, they look like they might blow away, collapse, or crumble.

Trouvé pushes the idea of structural



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instability even further by turning the entirety of the gallery into a subtly dissolving mess of wallpaper and carpet. Of course, the purpose of these materials is to make living spaces more comfortable. Yet the way these haphazardly unrolled swathes of office-drab gray and beige textiles crisscross the space—their excesses flaccidly unfurled against the hard right angles where the floor meets the wall—prove more unsettling than comforting. Due in large part to their unremarkable color, the disheveled floor and wall coverings aren't noticeable immediately, but once aware of them, you feel irreversibly disconcerted. The walls start to seem liquid. The space starts to feel unsafe. The flooring, with its overlapping seams and errant corners, sometimes trips you up as you walk around peeping into the lean-tos that sit atop them. You start to wonder: If the room continues to deteriorate around you, where would you go? What would you do?

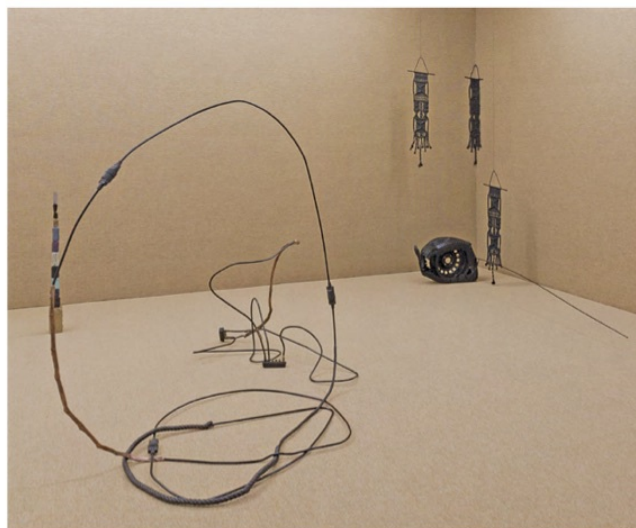
Looking closer at these unassuming structures, diminutive details come into focus. Despite the apparent roughness of the shelters, they actually glimmer with a warm metallic patina that makes the handprints, scratches, and pockmarks adorning their surfaces seem decorative rather than violent. Take, for example, *Dream Time Chart*, 2017, which boasts delicate lines etched across its surface like rivers on a map. They're lettered with aphoristic, almost whimsical handwritten labels: “*rosa dei venti*,” which translates from Italian to “wind rose,” a medieval precursor to the compass; “from here disappear;” “current wind chart;” “one day for eternity;” “secret passage;” “desire lines.” It's unclear if these are directions or appellations, but they nevertheless speak to a journey tinged with curiosity with no clear endpoint. One of the book forms that gird the lean-to is writer Jacques Meunié's 1961 chronicle of ancient West African architectures, *Cités Anciennes de Mauritanie*, which further emphasizes Trouvé's interest in the impermanence of built environments—and the people that must attend to their upkeep. Others include the simply titled tome *La Vie* and an agenda book dated to 1963.

In a 2015 *Huffington Post* interview, Trouvé noted that she is fond of a quote by Italian architect Ugo La Pietra: “To inhabit is to be at home everywhere.” She cites this quote in her artist statement for “House of

Leaves” as the impetus for the show as well. La Pietra's words suggest that the essence of living cannot be qualified by where you live or what you live in—that may ultimately end up unsound anyway. Trouvé's lean-tos prove that

the most pragmatic, reliable structure you can seek in life is the beautifully simple, humbling experience of the unknown. So let the walls fall down.

—Margaret Carrigan



Tatiana Trouvé
FROM TOP:
The Lunar Rotation, 2017.
Bronze, copper, paint,
37 x 53 x 33 in.

Untitled, 2017.
Bronze, copper, metal, paint, rubber, sisal,
120 x 278½ x 208 in.