

# ARTNEWS

REVIEWS

## ANOTHER BANQUET: JESSICA STOCKHOLDER OFFERS FOOD FOR THOUGHT AT MITCHELL-INNES AND NASH

BY *Ella Coon* POSTED 09/27/16 4:30 PM

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Installation view of "Jessica Stockholder: The Guests All Crowded Into the Dining Room," 2016, at Mitchell-Innes & Nash.

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In "The Guests All Crowded Into the Dining Room," her show at Mitchell-Innes & Nash in Chelsea, Jessica Stockholder playfully probes the intersection of edibility and sociability through a set of colorful assemblages. These assemblages—which merge the manmade (fluorescent orange rope and a

black computer bag) with the handmade (welding, painting, stitching), and the inorganic (Lexel caulking) with the natural (a tree root and sheep's skin)—are not the metaphorical main dish of the exhibition.

Awkwardly appropriating about one third of the gallery space is the site-specific piece *The Guests All Crowded Into the Dining Room* (2016), a work that, despite its aesthetic merits, is basically just an oversize plywood platform. Visitors are invited to walk on this structure, first ambling across the landing, then climbing the mustard yellow rubber-coated staircase, and eventually ending up on an angular stage.

From this vantage point, the viewer confronts a new vista, its outlook limited. The platform, tucked away in the corner of the gallery, is wedged between the two adjacent orange-sherbet and bubblegum-pink-colored walls covered with Stockholder's drawings, which combine childlike doodles and futuristic diagrams. The warmth of the walls coupled with the intimate-size drawings, most about 10 by 4 inches, suggests a setting as casual as a private study or dining room.

This tableau's modest illusion is disrupted, however, when the viewer turns and realizes she herself is on display. This mirroring of viewership (with viewing and being viewed as collapsing into each other) then connects back to the exhibition's title, recasting the gallery space as housing a kind of soirée, offering no actual food, but an alternative form of sustenance.

The exhibition further riffs on this figurative feast for the eyes. At the top of the platform, visitors find what could be considered the closest thing to real food in the piece *Shadows Over* (2016). This work is composed of painted scallop shells, affixed to one another with spray foam insulation and copper electrical wire, all resting on a bed of powder-blue ice-cube trays.



Jessica Stockholder, *Security Detail [JS 688]*, 2016, mixed media, installation view.

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But, the banquet doesn't stop there. The platform provides another delicacy—a bird's-eye view. From above, the onlooker can gorge on the other works in the exhibition, such as *Assist: Smoke and Mirrors* and *Assist #4 Carved Spaces* (both 2016). These are part of the artist's continuing series called

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“Assists,” in which she pairs interchangeable “tops” and “bases” in an improvisational Lego-like manner. In this case, both bases are plush armchairs, fitting into the exhibition’s dining-room theme.

This bird’s-eye view, however, holds more symbolic clout than this description suggests. And, viewed against the dish of jettisoned shells, which now looks more like the remnants of a seagulls’ bacchanal, it begs the question of what it really means for humans to make and consume anything.