

Erin M. Riley

## *The Consensual Reality of Healing Fantasies*

May 7 - June 12, 2021



**P·P·O·W** is pleased to present *The Consensual Reality of Healing Fantasies*, fiber artist Erin M. Riley's second solo exhibition with the gallery. Sourcing wool from shuttered textile mills around the United States, Riley washes, strips and hand-dyes her yarn before weaving on a Macomber loom. The resulting meticulously crafted tapestries depict intimate, erotic and psychologically raw imagery that reflects upon relationships, memories, fantasies, sexual violence and trauma. Collaging personal photographs, images sourced from the internet, newspaper clippings, and other ephemera to create her woolen compositions, the Brooklyn-based weaver exposes the range of women's lived experiences and how trauma weighs on the search for self-identity.

In an astounding accumulation of hand-made tapestries woven throughout the pandemic, *The Consensual Reality of Healing Fantasies* reveals how isolation unravels patterned coping mechanisms and mythologized methods of self-care. In works such as *Anxiety, 2020* Riley depicts scars from dermatillomania, usually kept concealed by clothing. Riley writes "I've learned my dark places are cyclical like cicadas. Growing in the dirt to emerge every decade. I photograph the bad moments because they do eventually fade and weaving this seemed inevitable. I've dealt with trichotillomania / dermatillomania as long as I can remember. At 35, I've been dealing with the fact that my favorite coping mechanisms just lead to more problems."

Navigating a new space in which the body is both desired and deplored, Riley contends with her corporeal self-worth in the absence of sexual affirmation amidst the unprecedented isolation of COVID-19. Untangling the fear intertwined with the formation of sexual identity, Riley, in *The Consensual Reality of Healing Fantasies*, shifts the focus towards the experience of growing up with a single mother who allowed men to be the most disruptive element of the home. Looking at her maternal side of the family's relationship with men, sexuality, desire, and shame, Riley investigates how the violence of misogyny is perpetuated through

generations. Rendering vintage domestic violence pamphlets from the 1970s, Riley imagines the kind of messaging informing her mother's own coping mechanisms. Taken together, the tapestries in *The Consensual Reality of Healing Fantasies* plumb the secrets we all mask in the search for self-actualization.

Erin M. Riley (b. 1985) received her BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and an MFA from the Tyler School of Art. Her work has been included in solo and group exhibitions at P·P·O·W, New York; Jonathan Hopson Gallery, Houston; Galerie Julien Cadet, Paris; Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles; Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden; The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs; Gana Art Gallery, Seoul; among others. Riley is the recipient of a United States Artists Fellowship Grant, 2021 and an American Academy of Arts & Letters Art Purchase Prize, 2021 and has completed residencies at The MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire and the Museum of Art and Design, New York.

This exhibition will run concurrently with Joe Houston's *RUINS* which will be presented in the gallery viewing room.