

Lauren DiCioccio's "Familiars"

Catalog mini-essay for my Headlands studio neighbor Lauren DiCioccio's sculpture collection "Familiars," published by Jack Fischer Gallery, San Francisco

A go is what you have. –Bhanu Kapil

It's over now, they are gone out into the world, but once upon a time, not this summer, but the one before, a construction for them began across the hallway from where I write poetry. Lauren called it an incubator, or burrow. She placed white board and white drapes to cover the metal grid walls, and gathered the warmth and color of many spools of thread and stacks of fabric—unusual in this dark building that was storage for the Nike missile site below us—gathered all the brightness behind and within the white. There, in the burrow, during the summer coastal fogs, she worked four to six long days each week. Relationships germinated, the work circling around, bumps propagating from one sculpture to another, then necks, then a pause. Outside, yellow fennel inflorescences embroidered the wind, an emergency of seed forming then ripening and dispersing. Other organic forms were multiplying by replicating vegetative structures, hybridization, backcrosses, or polyandry. I'd see Lauren step out to the view of the Pacific Ocean and set off for a run—past military buildings, graffiti, cliff erosion, and ice plant gotten away from management. All around us were projects exercising self-exceeding thinking, metonymy, rushes of obsession, dashed lines of stitching, trust in our many hours of labor measuring itself against nothing. During the winter, sculpture armatures that had been hidden began to be exposed. At night, the inhabitants of the burrow were covered with a white cloth. Orange poppies and blue-eyed grass flowered in spring; inside and outside were participating in inhalations of breath or photosynthesis and the full present tense of being made. Life hump-jumping forward. Until this summer, when Lauren's sixty-five colorful "familiars"—nurtured and in process all this time together and loved by many of us—the crowd of them, the family, was finished and released into the open. There each lost its innocence as it changed the nature of that space.