

Orly Genger



“Big Boss”



For “Material World,” a group exhibition at MASS MoCA exploring how artists can create extraordinary environments out of ordinary things, Orly Genger knotted, stacked, and painted 100 miles of lobster rope to form a monumental sculpture that bursts through the architecture and falls into riotous spills with all the intensity of a parted red sea. Genger was born in New York City and studied at Brown University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work is featured in various public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, Hood Museum, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art, where her installation *Whole* occupied the entrance space in 2008. She has had solo exhibitions at Larissa Goldston Gallery and the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum and has participated in numerous group shows. While part of a general resurgence of handcraft in contemporary art, Genger’s labor-intensive sculptures and installations eschew modest dimensions in favor of bravado, force, and blatant muscularity.

Ana Fineit Honigman: *What are the origins of the rope in Big Boss?*

Orly Genger: Most of the rope in the MASS MoCA piece is lobster rope, used to catch lobsters. About a year ago, when I was invited to participate in “Material World,” MASS MoCA did some research and discovered a huge amount of lobster rope in Maine. Apparently it was floating instead of sinking. There were literally mountains of this rope available to us. All of it had already been used, so it smelled like salt and fish, but there were mounds of it for the taking.

AFH: *Wasn’t working with it, well, gross?*

OG: I don’t get grossed out too easily, and I like getting dirty. This was more difficult than gross since the rope is so coarse and splintery. But it’s a non-issue. I’ll do whatever it takes to get the work made.

AFH: *How does the story behind the rope relate to your project?*

OG: The situation was born out of necessity. I needed an enormous amount of rope to make this piece without

an enormous budget, and MASS MoCA found the free lobster rope. “Free” and “rope” are two beautiful words. In turn, using the lobster rope became a way to take something deemed unusable for its original purpose and give it a second life.

AFH: *Art is an ingenious way to recycle. Do you incorporate the origins of your materials into your work?*

OG: While it’s true that my materials usually have a previous function or life, I don’t get too bogged down in the history. I just try to make the material my own like I’m working with steel or bricks – materials that we accept as more neutral in their origin. It’s just a building block to me. There are plenty of artists who use found or recycled materials to create new work. Depending on the artist, they often keep the original visual elements of the object intact.

If you take any object in the world and fill a space with it, you will most likely create an engaging installation. That part is pretty easy. But trying to use a material, whatever it may be, and push its natural inclinations and abilities to new levels is like entering a wrestling match. Trying to make a straight line out of something that inherently doesn’t adhere to linear forms is a challenge. Creating critical mass out of something relatively flat is not a simple task. What is inherent in my work is the idea of persistence, which I think has to be inherent in work that’s good.

TOP: ANA FINEIT HONIGMAN; CENTER: THE AUTHOR; BOTTOM: ORLY GENDER



Big Boss, 2009–10.
Rope and latex paint,
dimensions variable.

JAMES ELLIOTT CONNELL FOR THE WINTER 2010 ISSUE OF ART IN AMERICA

“Big Boss”



“Red, Yellow and Blue”



2013, recycled lobster rope and paint

“Red, Yellow and Blue”



“Red, Yellow and Blue”



“Masspeak”



2007, climbing rope and paint

“Current”



2014, recycled lobster rope and paint

“If”



2014, recycled lobster rope, 46 x 29 x 360 inches

“Milkman”



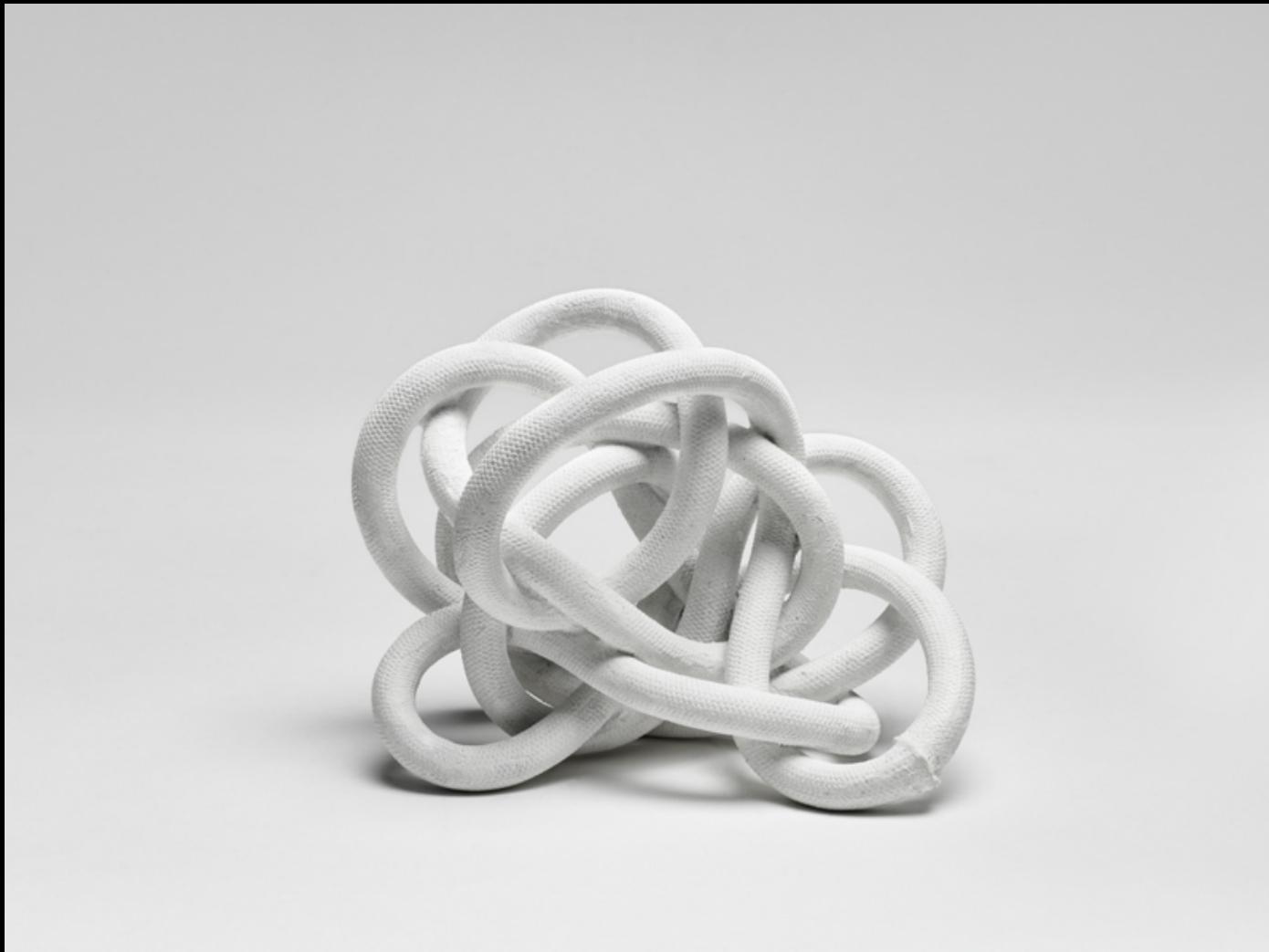
2013, recycled lobster rope, 180 x 18 x 96 inches

“Stroll”



2014, bronze, 26.5 x 7.5 x 10 inches

Untitled



2013, white bronze, 6 x 4.5 x 3.5 inches

“I’ll Never Lie to You Again, I Promise”



2009, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York, NY

“Royal Rumble”



2013, watercolor on paper, 103.5 x 45.5 inches

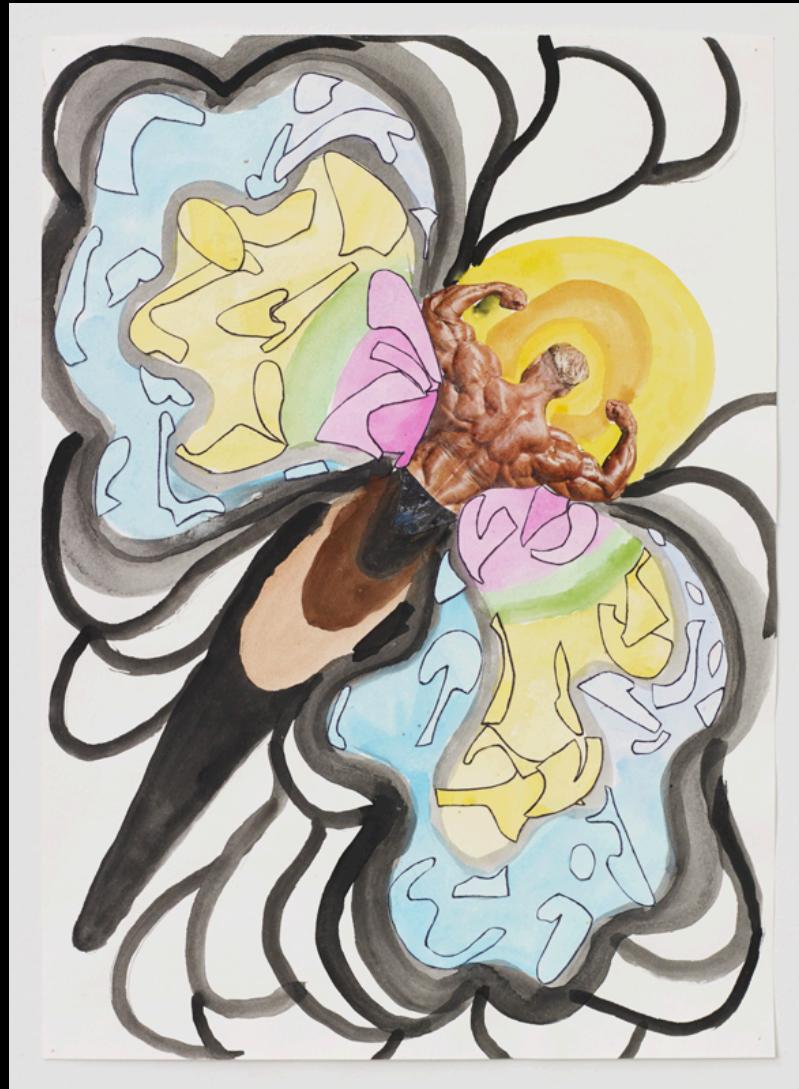
“Stretch” (detail)



2011, gouache on paper, 60 x 78.5 inches

Untitled

2012,
watercolor and
collage on
paper, 12 x 9
inches



The Hidelberg Project





The Number House, The People's House



House of Soul



Obstruction of Justice House, Party Animal House



The Motor City Lot



Noah's Arc

