



Photo Credit: Gianna Paniagua

# DELANIE JENKINS

Pittsburgh, PA

**R**aveling is a daylong performance in which the artist dismantles a substantial barge rope. The physical process is labor intensive: taking apart the heavy, dirty rope requires sustained effort and struggle. Both performance and its documentation invite the audience to consider the ways in which culture celebrates some laborers while ignoring others. While the word unraveling is more commonly used than raveling, they are synonyms. By opting for

## Raveling

mixed media installation/performance | 2013  
size variable  
on loan from the artist

the more obscure term, Delanie Jenkins removes the pejorative emotional connotations, which become all the more pointed when “unraveling” is applied to women of advanced age. The verb “raveling” highlights the paradoxically generative potential in the act of undoing something. Materialized as a single thick, ponderous line, the rope eventually becomes a multitude of thin but strong fibers. On the symbolic resonances of line in *Raveling*, Jenkins explains, “I think of line in relation to lineage, family of women makers, doing and undoing, trying to shift the narrative within their daily working choreography, the repetition that is a composition of action(s), both real and imagined, dreamed.”



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## REVIEWS

### A New Tale of the Tape: Delanie Jenkins at Stan McCollum

*By Brett Levine on June 24, 2014*



Delanie Jenkins, *Radix V*, 2014; radish roots on painted wire, dimensions variable.

If an art exhibition could undergo psychoanalysis, we would probably ask Delanie Jenkins's "Mixed Tape Transpositions," at Stan McCollum Gallery through July 19, to lie on the couch just a little longer. Quiet yet powerful, subtle yet complex, the works in this exhibition teeter just close enough on the edge of obsession to make practicing artists familiar and to make casual observers unaware. For what Jenkins achieves in frames just over 19 by 23 inches is nothing short of remarkable but disquietingly uncomfortable at precisely the same time.

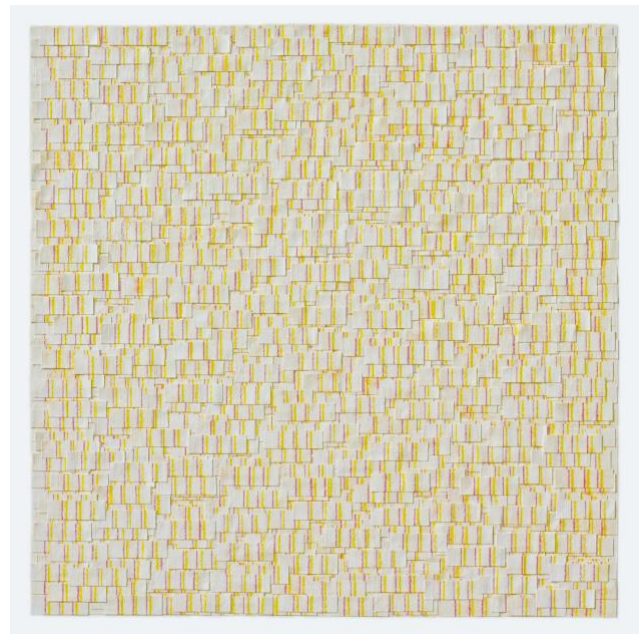
What is so intriguing about the works is Jenkins's ongoing fascination with quotidian materials. She is a collector of tape, which she peels, places, removes and collects, almost hoarding fragments for future use until they appear in works like *Full Circle (for Ruth Levine)*, a collage of tape fragments laid on a diagonal and cut into a circle, screen-printed black, so that somehow in the process the materiality of the piece is almost entirely obliterated. It becomes something that inhabits a space between painting, drawing, collage, assemblage, and found object work, yet it also shares a lineage with Op art and abstraction. Coming as it does at the far end of a wall, you can almost read it as a period, or to use the more poetic term, full stop.

In the main gallery, Jenkins juxtaposes an earthy exercise in mapping, the unusual *Radix V*, a mixed-media installation comprising dried radishes set on metal wires that undulate, its surface creating a topographic map that traces a journey from Pittsburgh to Atlanta. Only two points on the map are true, the starting and ending points, with everything in between being Jenkins's artist construction. This is in no way a criticism, as *Radix V* could suggest a host of things, and not being something particular gives viewers the space to overlay their own associations onto the work. It becomes anything – from an interstate to a mountain range to any other form of social or cultural mapping. But it also maps Jenkins's process, and in its undulations and movements across the wall you can see how she finds the rhythms of the space. When viewed straight on it does fall neatly into our understandings of a map. When viewed from the side, with your face almost pressed into the wall, it becomes something else entirely.



Delanie Jenkins, *Full Circle (for Ruth Levine)*, 2009-12; screenprint on archival tape, collaged on Lanaquarelle, 33½ by 45 inches.

Across the gallery, Jenkins sets up pairs that viewers will likely read as combinations and oppositions. Here, works with titles that include *Blue & Red Pearl III* next to *Purple Pearl III* and *Blue & Yellow Pearl III* next to *Green Pearl III* take spectators on what seems like a simple walk through color theory. While these facts are true – yellow and blue do make green, and blue and red do make purple – none of these optical impressions are truly at issue in the works. Instead, the focus is the physical properties of the tape and the interplays of its surfaces with the watercolor pencils she uses to inscribe upon it. On close inspection, Jenkins has layered what seems to be hundreds and hundreds, maybe thousands, of miniscule rectangles, each with small lines of the aforementioned colors, onto the page. So here are hundreds of pieces of white archival tape, each with a blue and yellow line; then another, and another, and again. Finally, when Jenkins has finished, the pieces of tape are trimmed into – in this case – a square.



Delanie Jenkins, *Red & Yellow Pearl III*, 2014; watercolor pencil and acrylic on archival tape, collaged on Lanaquarelle, 19 by 23 inches.

This process is documented over and over, with this intimate experience drawing the viewer deeper and deeper. The whiteness of the wall and the whiteness of the mount and the whiteness of the tape and the almost opaque nature of the almost imperceptible hand-drawn lines of the repetitive colors on the almost obsessively cut rectangles of tape literally glue viewers to the works' surfaces. It really does become something like an optical illusion or a color-blindness test, looking for variations in the tape. And they are there. Because Jenkins does every element of every piece by hand, they practically leap off the page with tension.

It helps to look at *Trimmings*, which is a collection of the trimmings that Jenkins salvaged from the archival tape works. Given her propensity to salvage everything for future reuse, the appearance of trimmings should come as no surprise. But in many ways *Trimmings* is a strong counterpart to *Radix V* simply because it too has a similar topography and a similar repetition, just on a much smaller scale.

Perhaps the easiest way to think about Jenkins's exhibition is this: It is like being drawn into a vortex. The more two-dimensional tape works are so dense with information that they pull you in so closely that you almost feel like you are stuck to the surface. Just when you feel that you can't look for a moment longer, just when your eyes are about to experience an optical effect, Jenkins drops in the third dimension, which pushes you away just a little and gives you just enough space to breathe.

Jenkins puts processes on display. It is in the torn edges of the tape or the trimmings, or in the blurred lines on the page that the marks of her hand and the deftness of her touch really come into play.

*Brett Levine is a writer and curator based in Birmingham.*



# IN REVIEW

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Reviewed by Jacqueline Ruyak

## Rock, Paper, Scissors

Fe Gallery

With *Rock, Paper, Scissors*, Pittsburgh curator Jill Larson took a clever concept, the universal hand game of rock-paper-scissors, and turned it into a lively, ambitious exhibition (April 4-May 23, 2010). Featuring works by 39 regional, national, and international artists, it was divided among three distinct sites in the city. Rock was at SPACE, located in the downtown cultural district, paper at AIR (Artists Image Resource), on the North Side, and scissors at Fe (pronounced F-e) Arts Gallery, in the Lawrenceville neighborhood. By chance, the three formed a triangle, mirroring Pittsburgh's downtown district, officially named the Golden Triangle.

Larson, who runs Fe, asked the artists to create works for the show; three showed earlier pieces, selected by her. She assigned artists to the spaces, based on her visionary sense of how their works would play off each other. Works had to be about the particular element, but did not have to use it. While many artists did use rock, paper, or scissors, they also employed a panoply of materials, from silk and aluminum mesh to anthracite and cupcake wrappers.

SPACE, the largest of the three sites, featured a mix of large and small installations, sculptural and mixed-media pieces, and video works. *Endless Column, Totem*, by George Davis, tied rock to axis mundi symbolism, à la Brancusi. Davis paired shadowy film stills of mountains—ubiquitous axis mundi symbols—with a floor-to-ceiling column of carved limestone, evoking Brancusi's own symbolic *Endless Column*. Laura Tabakman's *Rock Blossom*, a floor installation of slate, pebbles, and silk and polymer clay, had the refined feel of a Japanese rock garden. *Big Rock Candy Mountain: the Mine Tour*, by



LAURA TABAKMAN *Rock Blossom* Slate, pebbles, polymer clay and silk, 2010.

Carin Mincemoyer, was all fun. Openings in the mossy fairy-tale mountain revealed the tiny rock candy mining operation within.

In the hand game, paper covers rock. In Delanie Jenkins' *Patterns for Disarmament I and II*, beautiful, elegant, meticulously-wrapped rocks sat on shelves beneath printed images of the same. Jenkins addressed rocks as tools, useful for building, grinding, and such, but also used for violence when picked up and thrown in frustration and despair. So how exactly does paper cover rock? What is paper's strength? What is rock's weakness? Jenkins would have us ponder larger questions of violence and disarmament.

Paper was a cinch for AIR, a printmaking studio/gallery facility for independent artists and artists in residence. Anna E. Mikolay's astonishing lean-to of patchwork white paper, *Experiencing This Space And The Space Within*, looked ethereal yet was sturdy enough for visitors to crawl inside. Erika Osborne targeted the relation between nondurable goods and old-growth forests. Her sparsely beautiful *2749 Years for Matchsticks*, a detailed graphite pencil drawing of giant sequoia tree rings on wall-mounted matchboxes, made a poignant statement.

Bovey Lee's hanging *Falling Water*, made of silk-backed rice paper cut with the pattern of a chain-link fence, referenced Frank Lloyd Wright's

famed Fallingwater house located about 90 miles from downtown. Lee's piece floated against the wall, its cut pattern creating shifting shadows, like shimmering water. Jesse Alan Brown delivered a playful punch with *Enclosure Meditation No. 3*, a marvelous wall installation of glowing organic tendrils, made of stacked and opened Number 3 coin envelopes, that deftly subverted expectation.

Scissors were fitting for the cutting-edge Fe Arts Gallery, where sharp objects were on display. The treadle-activated array of heavy-duty scissors in Keny Marshall's *Die Geschichte vom Daumenlutscher (The Story of Little Suck-a-Thumb)* captured all the menace of the titular tale. Adrienne Heinrich's wall-mounted *SURGERY*, a set of surgical scissors suspended, like insects in amber, in rectangles of cast silicone, was both beautiful and unsettling.

Rose Clancy's *He Loves Me* started with a long strip of daisy-printed fabric that hung at gallery midpoint, each petal carefully cut out and heaped in a pretty pile below. The work, a play on the old game of "he loves me, he loves me not," continued with a long piece of barn wood, studded with live daisies, that ran down the center of the gallery. In a twist of black humor, every daisy had had its head lopped off at the exhibition opening.

In Larson's view, including works driven by fiber or surface design (27 of 39 artists in the show used fiber in some way) was not a conscious decision. "Rather, it's a natural process," she says, "because the work is some of the strongest being



LAURA TABAKMAN *Rock Blossom* Slate, pebbles, polymer clay and silk, 2010.  
BELOW: JESSE ALAN BROWN *Enclosure Meditation No. 3*  
Number 3 Coin Envelopes, 2010.



made, as legitimate and important as any work out there. It has penetrated the contemporary art scene, both in and out of shows deemed to be about textiles or fiber. *Rock, Paper, Scissors* shows how contemporary artists are pushing the boundaries of what constitutes fiber art and using more and more textiles in their work to express their concepts and ideas."

For years, Larson had wanted to have a show that connected three parts of the city. She wanted to get people to cross bridges and venture into new neighborhoods. On opening night, a private trolley shuttled artists and guests between galleries. "I had never been on a trolley," says Larson. "Lots of people hadn't. But we all had a great time. Some people thought the trolley should run every day."

—Jacqueline Ruyak is a writer based in Wassergass, Pennsylvania.



## PITTSBURGH

### Delanie Jenkins at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

The provocative work of Pittsburgh-based Delanie Jenkins is derived from the detritus of daily existence that she obsessively collects. Her exhibition, created from clementine peels, radish roots, paper towels and her own hair cuttings, entices the viewer to pause and examine the splendor of the everyday. *Radix* (2007) comprises the delicate roots of over 700 radishes—the amount Jenkins consumed over seven or eight years—pinned with white wires to a curving 26-foot-long wall in a random, flowing configuration. The source of the rose-colored tendrils attached to the wires is not immediately evident; the dried roots become abstracted and seem too delicate and lovely to have come from a common radish.

Another gallery was filled with works inspired by clementine peels. In a playful transformation from 3-D to 2-D and back again, a pair of 60-by-36-inch inkjet prints and a suite of 12 etchings of peels were displayed alongside soft sculptures made from digital prints on canvas. To make these objects, ranging from 12 inches to 4 feet in diameter, Jenkins cut out the images of the peels and stitched them together to form awkward and oddly shaped fruit that appears to be in varying states of decomposition. In another room, cast white chocolate slabs imprinted and etched with the pattern of paper towels were displayed in vitrines; a series of works on paper embossed with the same patterns hung on the walls.

The show's centerpiece, *11,280 strands and counting . . .*, consists of three approximately 120-by-42-inch inkjet prints on vinyl, each depicting a chopped-off ponytail of Jenkins's auburn hair. The grossly enlarged images invite the viewer to examine each individual strand of hair, which is exactly what Jenkins herself did: each week of the exhibition she spent an allotted time in the gallery counting and measuring the actual strands of these ponytails, recording the data in a small black notebook, and then carefully setting the individual hairs into an archival storage box. This process began a few months before the exhibition, and, with the help of interns, Jenkins was able to count 11,280 strands by the opening of the show. The laboriousness of this piece brings to mind the work of Ann Hamilton, who often references local history in her performance installations. By comparison, Jenkins's work might seem self-indulgent as it relates to her day-to-day existence. Yet through her obsessive activities—collecting, counting, measuring and observing—she crafts a unified whole from fragments and remnants. She assembles the cast-off, ordinary moments that seem insignificant but that add up to a poignant record of a life lived.

—Melissa Kuntz

View of Delanie Jenkins's exhibition, 2007, showing two digital prints, six etchings, and soft sculptures; at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts.

