

Saturday — A Studio Visit



AS | MAG [Follow](#)

Jul 13 · 2 min read ★



Exhibition view of "Shape/Shifters" by Annette Cords, curated by Jill Conner at Project:ARTspace, January — February 2020. Image courtesy of the author.

I was standing at my kitchen sink on Saturday morning when a bright red color caught the corner of my eye. It was a sticker on the bottle of dish soap that read, "ATTACKS" in capital letters. I looked at it again because the term seemed like quite an affront, given the current context that has caused us to shelter-in-place.

"ATTACKS" remained on my mind throughout the day, even while traveling to an in-person studio visit — the first in many months — to see new tapestries by Annette Cords. Cords' studio is in

Greenpoint, Brooklyn and her textiles bear patterns that grow out of graffiti tags seen along the streets of New York. Like “ATTACKS,” street writing has always caught the public’s attention. People either love it, or hate it, even though it is the centerpiece of the free museum.

However if I saw “ATTACKS” on an artwork, what would the visual experience be? Most text art always falls flat, because the letters and the words are signs that are easily recognizable. The forms do not share the same place in our mind that visual art does. In fact text art is confusing because it causes the mind to see a work of art from two different locations at once: the pictorial resides in the preconscious while the text appears directly in the conscious.

What I like about Annette’s wall tapestries is that her compositions dig deep into the style and gesture of street writing. Each composition is densely layered with numerous threads that reflect images and forms that oscillate between appearing highly realistic and abstract. One is always left guessing about what the artwork shows. The patterns and the lettering remain a mystery.

Text emerges from a sphere that issues commands and requests. It is also the sphere of innate compulsion, the one that is naturally full of short words and few letters. Text also presents itself daily as brief, pointed thoughts that are then disseminated across social media. Books and personal letter writing have no standing in this scope of textual thinking.

In the work of Annette Cords, text and sign representations are highly dependent upon the type of thread used. Often one doesn't realize that they are looking at a part of text. Cords isolates specific kinds of curves and marks in order to compliment the different weave structures that appear throughout her tapestries. These tall pieces of vibrant textiles take your mind where art is supposed to go, away from immediate, shallow thinking and further into the depth of the preconscious mind. From there, the memory will refine and return more productively.

. . .

Jill Conner, New York

Contemporary Art

Fine Art

Painting

Graffiti

Studio Visit

Discover Medium

Welcome to a place where words matter. On Medium, smart voices and original ideas take center stage - with no ads in sight. [Watch](#)

Make Medium yours

Follow all the topics you care about, and we'll deliver the best stories for you to your homepage and inbox. [Explore](#)

Become a member

Get unlimited access to the best stories on Medium — and support writers while you're at it. Just \$5/month. [Upgrade](#)

Medium

About

Help

Legal