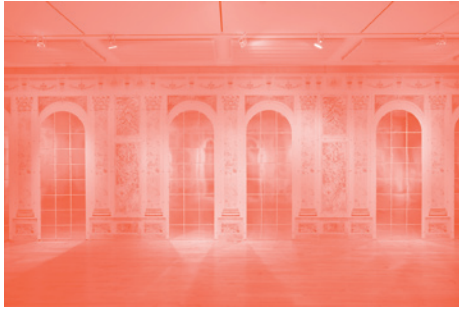


BEYOND
BAUHAUS
ON THE
WALL:
ELIZABETH
CORKERY
MAY 1ST -
JULY 26TH
2019

Providence
College—
Galleries



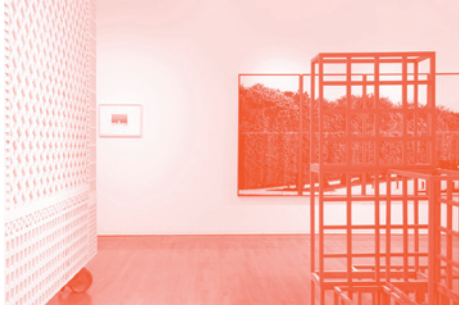
Marble Baseboard, 2012
Screenprint on MDF. Fifteen panels,
each 16" x 24"



Absolute Monarchy, 2012
Screenprint and adhesive mirror
vinyl on MDF; plastic mirror
clips, digital prints.
Dimensions variable.



Pieces from Pictures, 2017
Screenprint on plywood, epoxy
modeling clay, digital print on
paper, custom timber pedestals.
Dimensions variable.



Nowhere is there a garden, 2013
Screenprint on paper, CNC
routed plywood, etching on paper,
timber lattice.
Dimensions variable.

On the Wall: Elizabeth Corkery. May 1st, 2019 – July 26th, 2019.

In a makeshift studio on Providence College's campus, Elizabeth Corkery surrounded herself with cans of paint, MDF panels, silk-screen frames and films, and spools of wool string. While such goods might seem like the primary and raw materials of an artist best known for making artworks that flirt with installation and reimagine space, unfolding across walls and floors and uncontained by frame or pedestal, they are merely the means to an end. And that end is ambitious—*On the Wall: Elizabeth Corkery* consists of a small series of meticulously crafted art objects and a large-scale, multi-component mural applied directly to the walls of PC-G's Reilly Gallery. For an artist like Corkery, the real impetus is a story. One that tells of the coming together of seminal Modernist figures and their ideas, especially those heralded by the Bauhaus, a short-lived German art school. As the layers of this commissioned exhibition showcase, this narrow precinct of art and cultural history changes everything and, in many ways, makes possible the very conditions of art-making in which Corkery created a project at and for Providence College's campus.

Before the telling of that particular story, it's important to first consider the themes of Corkery's oeuvre to date. Her work is grounded in readings of the built environment, and with nearly every project, Corkery deconstructs a site, or an image of that site, selecting some aspects of its structural idiosyncrasy or decorative style to examine through reproduction and compositional fragmentation. In doing so, she is as keen to appropriate the minimalist, almost generic, architectural features found in a contemporary art gallery as she is to reproduce the ornate details of a Victorian parlor. As evidenced in the exhibitions *Nowhere is there a garden* (2013) and *Pieces from Pictures* (2017), Corkery often constructs discreet architectural objects, which, thanks to an orderly Modernist aesthetic, serve as both sculptures and functional display units. She also frequently composes playful yet precisely rendered paintings and drawings on paper, depicting fragments of various objects and spaces as a kind of homage to the labor-intensity of traditional techniques. Several previous works incorporate allusions to film and actual employments of silk-screen printmaking, which, unlike Corkery's hand-drawn and painted works on paper, are unmistakably mechanical. The printed facets of these assemblies, such as the wallpapers and decorative trims found in an early installation like *Absolute Monarchy* and *Marble Baseboard* (both 2012), re-create structures from the past whilst reinventing them via subtle references—half-tone dots and blends—to the mechanical reproduction of an image.

But far from being a formalist, Corkery is an artist whose work borders on the ethnographic, addressing the social and political structures of environments' creators and users. By disconnecting symbolic imagery from its original context and formal hierarchy, the signs she presents to the viewer can be visually indexed and more easily deciphered. Presentations that include singular works of mimicry, like the trio of gouache paintings of toy theater curtains and the simplified scale models of Wardian cases in *Small Decors* (2014), therefore reveal elements of decorative and architectural styles as heavily laden repositories of various ideologies.



Oehmigte & Riemsschneider Curtain, 2014
Gouache and digital print on paper. 20"x15"



Small Decors (installation view), 2014
Screenprint on MDF, painters' tape, lasercut plywood, gouache and digital print on paper.
Dimensions variable.

Corkery's installation for the annual On the Wall program similarly distills and re-presents her primary source material, which happens to be the story of a significant moment in twentieth-century art history, when the radical idealism of early modern art is first pitted against and then integrated into a range of styles long embraced by the United States' most prestigious institutions of higher learning.

...

On the Wall: Elizabeth Corkery is mounted as the first presentation in PC-G's Beyond Bauhaus program, a yearlong series of thematic projects exploring the relationship contemporary artists have with the legacy of the Bauhaus, an early twentieth-century German art school and pedagogy that combined the applied and fine arts and is credited with inspiring the rationale for much of today's art education. Tracing the Bauhaus lineage from Germany to New England, Corkery looks to the modernization of design training at Harvard's newly formed Graduate School of Design (GSD), which paved the way for Bauhaus founding director Walter Gropius' arrival in New England. Of specific interest are the results of the at first amenable and later discordant relationship between Gropius and Joseph Hudnut, the architect and dean of GSD who invited Gropius to serve as the first director of the GSD. Working alongside each other for more than 15 years, these two figures influenced the world of architecture and design in lasting ways, colliding their activities, styles and egos into what could be considered the current state of architecture and its proliferation as an everlasting, cumulative series of social gestures. Corkery's project for PC-G parses and transmutes a few of the visible aspects of this series to create the first solo exhibition of her work in Rhode Island.

Appropriately, Corkery's foundational treatment of the long wall in PC-G's Reilly Gallery begins with a referential nod to the Bauhaus as an actual school (not as some kind of splintered, mutated, multiplying global credo or 'International Style'), where a generation of Modernists, especially Gropius, sought to train a new generation of artists and designers. Via workshops led by leading masters of form and technique, students in the wall-painting workshop designed and produced murals, reliefs and color schemes to function like architectural elements. The bottom layer of Corkery's *On the Wall* mural is correspondingly painted with a simplified formal language—solid colors, basic geometric shapes, perspectival composition with horizon line—that alternately reads as an abstract painting and an architectural site for object display. In many ways, however, the artist transcends this Bauhaus educational tradition, which rigidly oriented itself around a master artist and his notions of ideal palettes and forms. She not only mines a more robust legacy of abstraction but also treats the overlapping narratives of art history as a medium to be manipulated. Conjuring a long trajectory of sources not limited to Non-western pattern painting, abstract photography and the applied arts of traditional women's work, Corkery's painting gives due reverence to innovative creations by under-recognized Bauhaus women artists, like the toy furniture designs and painted maquettes of Alma Siedhoff-Buscher and the illusionistic textiles of Otti Berger.

The second layer of Corkery's mural artwork considers two specific gestures initiated by Hudnut during Harvard's ideological pivot towards Modernist design education. The first was the emptying of the 'Hall of Casts,' the school's repository of Classical art plaster casts and replicas used for teaching.





On The Wall: Elizabeth Corkery (installation view of Robinson Red Brick and Hudnut's Ornament), 2019
Tufted wool carpet, ink and watercolor on paper. Dimensions variable.



On the Wall: Elizabeth Corkery - Hudnut's Ornament, 2019
Ink and watercolor on paper. 15" x 20"



On The Wall: Elizabeth Corkery (detail of Master of Forms), 2019
Painted mural, silkscreen on painted MDF. 43ft x 13ft.

The second was the paring back of the ornamented façade of the university's Robinson Hall when the building's photographic likeness was used on GSD letterhead and in other printed collateral. For *On the Wall*, Corkery screen printed onto organic shapes cut from MDF photographic imagery depicting elements of Classical sculpture and decoration similar to those housed in the 'Hall of Casts' and adorning various edifices that, like Robinson Hall, were interspersed throughout Harvard's mostly Georgian-style campus. With the relief-like biomorphic forms, the artist alludes to Bauhaus-style interventions later instigated by Gropius on Harvard's campus. In this case, she appropriates the signature forms of Hans Arp, an Alsatian artist who Gropius commissioned to create a site-specific artwork for Harvard's Graduate Center, the first modernist building on Harvard's campus. By synthesizing the visual elements of these events along formal and material lines, Corkery shows how this short period, that is the overlapping tenures of Hudnut and Gropius, precedes the complexly layered qualities of today's visual and architectural landscapes, even those of Providence College's own eclectically styled campus.

On the Wall: Elizabeth Corkery makes obvious an artist's commitment to research and craft, as well as her longtime interest in dismantling the pervasive hierarchies of visual art practices and movements. Complimentary artworks—presented as fragments designed to both appropriate and function as historical documents or artifacts—underscore the importance of two instances when Hudnut gave visible form to his ideas on modernizing architecture and design curricula. The first was his distribution of photographic imagery featuring Robinson Hall with a streamlined exterior, and the second was his dispensing of most of the building's Beaux-Arts educational infrastructure through the dramatic alteration of its floorplan. In an ode to the original details of Robinson Hall's façade, and by extension to the many pre-Modernist structures found on most college campuses and throughout all American cities, Corkery presents pairs of tufted wall tapestries and pen and ink drawings that both memorialize and recontextualize such features. Woven with the easily accessible materials espoused in Bauhaus textile workshops, the tapestries appropriate the brick pattern covering Robinson Hall's exterior. The drawings illustrate the building's frontispiece and decorative ornaments, which Hudnut sought to remove (but survives to this day). These mural-adjacent artworks operate similarly to Corkery's wall reliefs—they are hybrid forms that harken various historical features and evoke multiple sentiments, such as nostalgia for past, hope for the future, or something in between.

...

While *On the Wall: Elizabeth Corkery* combines and celebrates the fine and applied arts of a well-studied period of art history, it also reveals the innumerable points at which an artist's visual sense of the past intersects with their capacity to create something new. The raw materials, whether formal or conceptual, that invigorate such work hold our attention and coax our contemplation on our built environments. They prompt us perpetually observe our surroundings, and to be aware of their origins so that we can better envision what's to come. And as Corkery shows us, the story of these places we create is actually a process of understanding. Thankfully, that process is inherently generative and never complete.

—Jamilee Lacy, PC-G Director & Chief Curator

ABOUT THE ARTIST—Elizabeth Corkery (b. 1986) lives and works in Sacramento, California. Born in Sydney, Australia, she moved to the United States after completing her BFA in Printmaking at the College of Fine Arts, Sydney, Australia. She received her MFA from Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. She has been artist-in-residence at the Frans Masereel Centrum, Kasterlee, Belgium; Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT; and The Slade, UCL, London, UK. She has received production and research funding in the US from Brooklyn Arts Council, The Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation, as well as Australian philanthropic organizations The Australia Council, The Dame Joan Sutherland Fund and The Ian Potter Cultural Trust. Corkery has presented in solo and group exhibition at venues around the world, such as Beers Contemporary, London, UK; Telfer Gallery, Glasgow, UK; First Draft Gallery, Sydney, AU; Tower Hill Botanic Gardens, Boylston, MA; New Art Center, Newton, MA; and Outside Gallery, North Adams, MA, among others. She is also the Founder/Director of the international printmaking collaborative and publisher, Print Club, Ltd.

ABOUT PC–G—Providence College Galleries (PC–G) presents exhibitions and public programs focusing on contemporary art, innovative artistic practice and interdisciplinary cultural activity. Operating within two gallery spaces and across Providence College's campus, PC–G supports the educational, service and community-oriented mission of the College with dynamic visual arts productions, including those that foster audience participation, cross-departmental collaboration at the College, and cultural exchange at local, national and international levels. PC–G ultimately strives to produce projects by artists and intellectuals who demonstrate how and why creative practitioners are vital forces in promoting diversity and shaping contemporary global culture.

On the Wall: Elizabeth Corkery is organized by Jamilee Lacy, PC–G Director & Chief Curator, with Jenna Lavalley, Consulting Exhibitions & Events Coordinator. Technical assistance provided by Scott Alario and Naushon Hale.

Lead support provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Department of Art & Art History at Providence College and Arts Access Grant from Rhode Island State Council for the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and private funders.

**Providence College Galleries
—Hunt-Cavanagh Gallery at Hunt-Cavanagh Hall,
—Reilly Gallery at the Smith Center for the Arts
Providence College, Providence, RI 02918**

**401.865.2400
pcgalleries@providence.edu
pcgalleries.providence.edu**

BEYOND BAUHAUS 2019 – 2020

A New(er) Unity
An Online Primer for Beyond Bauhaus

April 15, 2019 –
August 1, 2020

On the Wall:
Elizabeth Corkery

May 1, 2019 –
July 26, 2019

From the seafoam and
clouds to the here and now

September 11 –
November 17, 2019

Katarina Burin

December 4, 2019 –
March 1, 2020

Construction House
Heather Rowe & Ad Minoliti

December 4, 2019 –
March 1, 2020

On the Wall
LUFTWERK

April 29, 2010 –
July 26, 2020

PC
-G



Andy Warhol

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

ארטיס אג'נטיס
artis
grant
program

