

**Liesbeth Henderickx**  
**Gewand**  
**FRED&FERRY GALLERY**  
**14.10-11.11.2023**

With *Gewand*, Liesbeth Henderickx touches on the connection between patterns and ornaments, textile and architecture, craftsmanship and creativity. Her stone puzzles and wool structures reshape our perspective on the objects that surround us. Henderickx unravels ways to demand attention for often-overlooked details, to avoid becoming blind to what we have come to take as a given. Growth stalls when we cease to acknowledge the patterns within which we live, as is shown by the artist's vision on craftsmanship that harbours respect and a sense of wonder for the space objects and materials are allotted. A mountain rock exists as a bathroom tile elsewhere.

The title of this exhibition, *Gewand*, references both the German word for "robe" and the Dutch word for "wall", establishing a direct connection between Henderickx's use of textile on the one hand and stone on the other. In *Knitwise* (2023), fabric is intentionally treated as a form of architecture. As Henderickx sees it, this kind of large-scale knitting is just as demanding as stonemasonry. During the creative act, her arms turn into giant knitting needles, her body becomes an intimate creative machine. The monumental scale is directly correlated to the dimensions of her own anatomy. With physical effort comparable to building a wall, the artist creates a knitted piece as large as herself. It's heavy enough to completely overpower her. Functioning as extensions of themselves, her constructions and sculptural installations use an invisible thread to connect body and architecture.

In *Gewand* (2023) a wool pattern is enlarged and repeated. We cannot ignore the presence of its texture. The knitted chunks are broken plaster casts, and form an undefined question with which we learn to understand the material from within – a form of understanding that is essential for Henderickx in order to facilitate growth. The repetitive aspect leaves room for development and experimentation; how do these remnants relate to each other within this space? How do viewers feel towards these gargantuan fossils of warmth and familiarity? When we lose attention to our imagination, everything comes to a standstill.

For Henderickx, architectural decorations from the past bear witness to a spontaneous creativity that has gradually disappeared into the quicksand of taking things for granted. *Wild Cable (1),(2),(3)* (2023) consists of a long, knitted strip of patterns, stitched together by the knitting machine like architectural blueprints. The shape and relief are reminiscent of temple friezes. The nature-inspired patterns of facades are reflected in soft wool fabrics. Presented as an oversized bobbin, the work suggests a homely interior composed with tenderness and care. It is used by the artist to create a connection between the interior and exterior of our domestic spaces. It's a reflection on our contemporary architectural landscape, where decorative elements are absorbed by minimalism, though we are still enveloping our interiors with the warmth and radiance it deserves.

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Knitting culture has evolved and transformed over time, but Henderickx's focus lies in the artistic choices of individuals who knit for themselves, balancing on their own creative tightrope. She draws a connection with the Gothic stone cutters, who freely designed their ornaments by taking inspiration from the natural world around them. Their artistic development was unbound, free from imposed designs. In doing so, Henderickx also underscores the role materials play in our society, where there is a pecking order among materials based on the value attributed to marble versus pebbles.

Henderickx's creations invite us to reconsider how we underestimate the worth of the everyday, and to purposefully integrate construction elements into our vicinity. She prefers it when the connection between individuals and their environment can be as comfortable as a cushioned coat. This exhibition sets out to re-think the bond between people and materials, bodies and architecture. In addition, her installations and concepts pay homage to the freedom to create, craftsmanship, and the pursuit of progress. The artist reminds us that beauty takes shelter in the things we think we know, as long as we are willing to look towards them with restored wonder.

Yasmin Van 'tveld