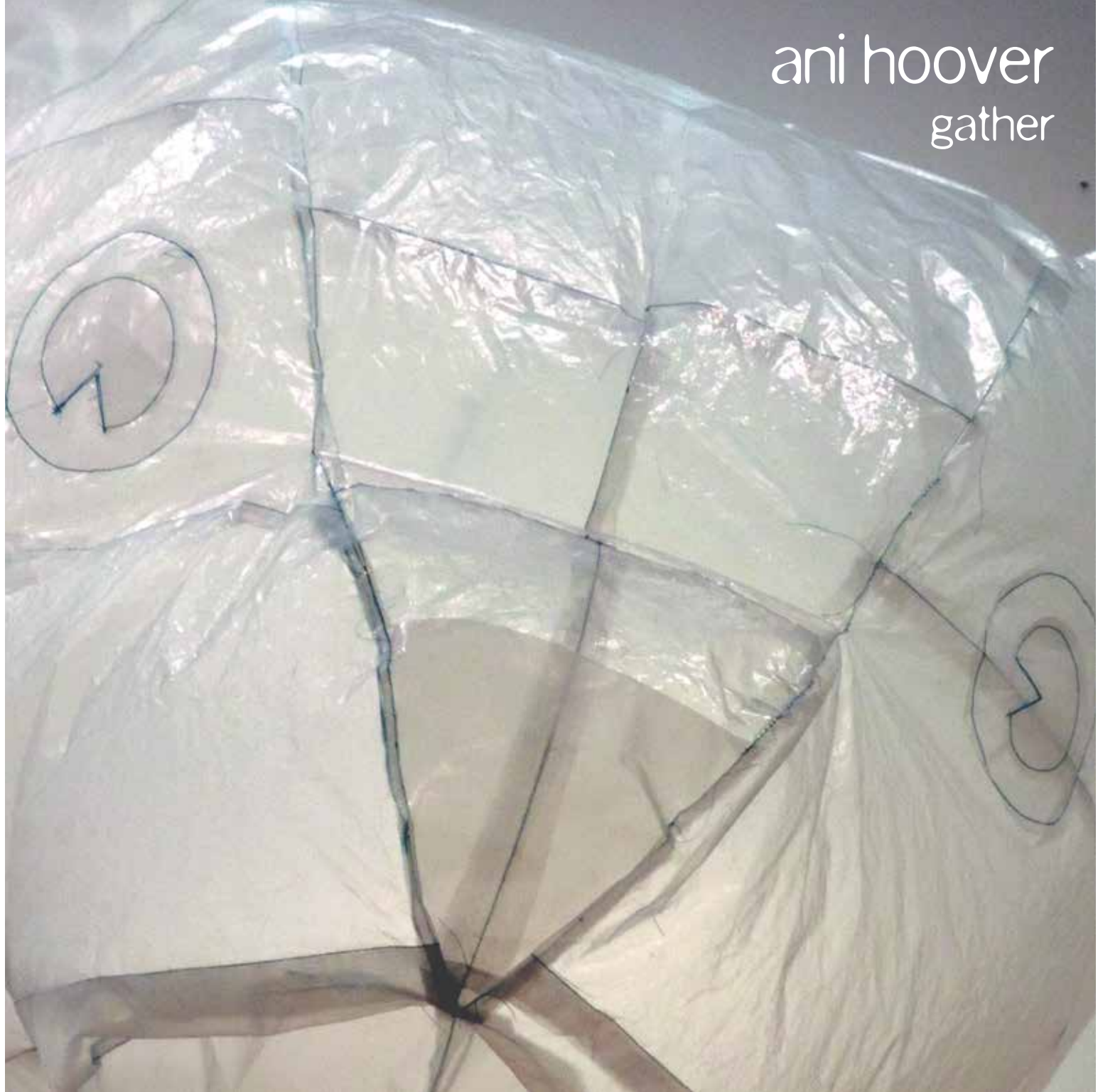




ani hoover
gather

ANI HOOVER • GATHER • January 17 to February 28, 2014

list of works: Teddy Bear, 2014, recycled plastic, thread; Yarn Ball, 2001-14, yarn; Rubber Garden, 2010-14, post-consumer bicycle inner tubes

Ani Hoover grew up in Missouri, always knowing she wanted to be an artist of some kind. She studied painting at Missouri State University and went on to graduate school at American University in Washington, DC. In 2002 Hoover moved to Buffalo, and has exhibited her paintings extensively in the Western NY Region, including at the Castellani Art Museum, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Burchfield Penney Art Center, University of Buffalo Art Galleries among others. Since 2010 Hoover's work has focused on re-imaging and deconstructing her older works of art, using recycled materials and sculpture. You can find Hoover's work many prominent collections including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, UB's Anderson Gallery, The Burchfield Penney Art Center, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, M & T Bank, First Niagara Bank, Phillips Lytle LLP and many private collections throughout the US. www.anihoover.com

Ani would like to thank her many friends who helped her gather yarn and cereal bags for this exhibit and Rick's Cycle Shop for supplying the post consumer bike tires for the Rubber Garden. Big thanks to Wayne Magyar for his technical expertise, support, and patience. The pieces in Gather are all presented in loving tribute to Dr. Michael C. Hoover and Blanche E. Pennebaker. Thank you.

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The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts



For many years, Buffalo artist Ani Hoover has been utilizing a mode of formal repetition as the prominent methodology for her work. Much of this has centred a seemingly-endless iteration of painted circular forms in various permutations—from small works on paper to works on canvas to large-scale installations. Color and form have predominated the work, but incessant process has lain underneath it all as a prevalent language.

However, this incessant process and repetition for Hoover has never been an end in itself—while the circle works have offered a plentiful dose of visual beauty, these works always strove for a space beyond the genre of merely delightful patterning. While the artist herself refers to the practice of “collecting, arranging, assembling.....then doing it all over again,” this has always manifested itself more as a path than a destination.

In a unique turn, her new exhibition *Gather* features no paintings whatsoever and instead presents three distinct sculptural forms. Like the circular works, these new pieces rely on process and accumulation (two in the extreme and one more selectively) but are noticeably created from repurposed materials. A rubber garden of bicycle tires, an oversized yarn ball, and an inflated plastic teddy bear initially seems like an odd trio, but they are all linked conceptually as cues to memory, loss, and memorial in a manner both allusive and expansive.

The intended effect of Hoover’s floor-strewn rubber garden is immediately apparent and distinctive. It presents a compelling image constructed from accumulated forms while suggesting it is about something else. It is not inappropriate to discern a funereal aspect from the piece as it connects for the artist to the loss of her father. But the work’s gothic

darkness is not merely about loss. There is a lush and gorgeous mystery inherent in the piece—a garden that remains verdant and fulsome while not relying on the more sentimental garden tropes of color and brightness. Though, despite its dark aspect, there are wisps of color throughout (derived from details of the repurposed rubber) so it’s not a work that merely evokes a mournful gloom, but one that suggests there are complexities within any darkness. Even that which appears entirely dark is not necessarily so.

Her ball of yarn functions from a wildly different direction. Rather than the comfortable splay of dark rubber spreading out widely across the floor, the yarn ball is a tightly-wound planet of endless color. The yarn ball immediately evokes specific memory cues of comfort, familiarity, and home and in doing so, shares a memorial aspect with the rubber garden as it suggests a remembrance of something or, more perhaps appropriately, someone. Though it’s not a world record-sized yarn ball, it’s size is sufficient to create an imposing presence. In a strange formal twist, the yard ball is the one new work that perhaps connects most directly with Hoover’s past body of work—it is, after all, an endless iteration of colored circles, albeit realized here in three dimensions.

Punctuating the exhibition like a benevolent buddha is Hoover’s oversized teddy bear form, constructed from recycled plastic. Where the garden is largely black and the yarn ball explodes with color, the teddy bear is (with the exception of the faint bloodline of blue thread that holds it together) largely colorless. Its transpar-

ency might be read as a hollowness, the void created by loss, its scale huge because that’s how loss feels, its emptiness complete and undeniable. Alternately, that internal void is encompassed in a familiar and accessible form, suggesting a space less invested in loss than in possibility. As it currently appears, it is an unstuffed bear, suggesting that what we stuff ourselves with might be wholly optional. Like a buddha, it is placid and open to the possibilities we bring to it.

Set against Hoover’s other two works, in which accumulation and gathering (of both materials and memories) is more overt, the teddy bear draws forth a curious question—when we gather, what is it that we gather exactly? Heartfelt sensations? Objects, dreams, and relics? Memories and aspirations? Or all at the same time?

Hoover’s new works are astute in the cues to which they direct us. Concisely realized, they are far from simple because the cues to which they direct us are far from simple. They are a trio of works that play against each other formally in their material aspect while sharing numerous resonant sentiments. When we gather, it is much more than mere stuff that we accumulate and even if the gathering draws from a past of memory and loss, these elements can always feed future growth.

John Massier
Visual Arts Curator

