

sculpture

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LOS ANGELES

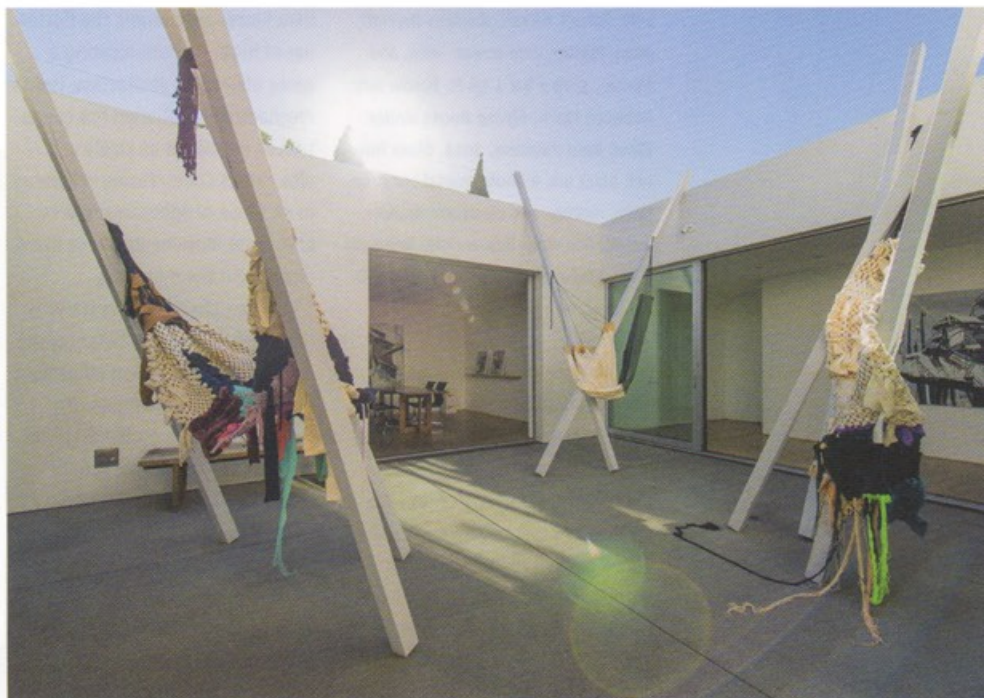
Mie Olise

Samuel Freeman Gallery

"Noplocia," the title of Danish artist Mie Olise's recent exhibition, is taken from the opening line of the poem that introduces Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). More invented both word and concept, basing his visualization of a perfect society on Plato's *Republic*. Olise's *Noplocia*, a locale distinguished by abandoned, dystopian, and desolated architectural spaces, opposes this *Republic*. Her structures embody the idea of "transrealism," a literary form related to science fiction and based on the idea that reality is either constructed or nonexistent.

Working with both organic and geometric forms, Olise blends architecture, art, and psychology. Her objects are provisional, reducing the concept of sculpture to a few minimal precepts. The results resemble temporary structures that have inexplicably fallen in on themselves, becoming non-things in non-spaces. The work is so transitional, so contingent, that it challenges the idea of sculpture as stationary form. A stationary form would suggest a belief in the stable and eternal; this work implies the exact opposite, and a strong wind would completely erase it.

Aside from several fabric wall pieces, the most interesting sculptural work in "Noplocia" consisted of three structures installed in an open-air atrium; the reflective glass around the space, which multiplied the views, made the work appear more substantial than it was. The primary structural elements of all three works consisted of 16-foot lengths of white-painted wood, placed at various angles against the atrium walls. Each structure was draped with a fabric element held in place by nails driven into the wood. When unwrapped from the structures, the fabric is hammock-shaped, thus the titles: *Hammock*



1-3. Two of the hammocks bear hand-loomed tapestries of different colors and textures. Some of the fabric sections are made from unraveled or ripped sections of canvas; one piece is made entirely from textiles that resemble drapes. The fabric makes the structures resemble collapsed looms or the haphazardly colorful tents in refugee encampments. The gallery removed the fabric wrappings each night and replaced them each day, approximately reconstructing the pieces as originally arranged by the artist.

Olise's structures imply that nothing is fixed or stable, that everything is contingent. Her ideas lie lightly, leaving open to conjecture whether what is in front of you means one thing, or something else again, or nothing at all. Although the structures create a space of reflection and invite the viewer's speculation, only contradictory meanings can be teased out from them. This is not to say that her provisional approach is not serious. Her work reflects a concern with imperfection, the off-kilter, and the not quite right, embracing unpredictable encounters and

emphasizing the physicality and experience of the work over notions of meaning and content.

— Kathleen Whitney