

# Julia Bland & Daniel Petraitis

Hard as You Can, Right at the Middle

April 03 - May 10, 2014



**Asya Geisberg Gallery** is pleased to present “Hard as You Can, Right at the Middle”, an exhibition of works by **Julia Bland** and **Daniel Petraitis**. Julia Bland creates large-scale textile works that combine modern-day tapestries with un-stretched, stitched, and recombined painting supports. Daniel Petraitis’s diverse sculptures transform or recreate objects and forms found through our day-to-day experience, with remarkable finesse and craftsmanship. While markedly different in the media and scale of their work, these two artists share a love of nuanced and thoughtfully constructed surfaces, an interest in the symbolic uses of pattern, and a disruption of prevailing distinctions between art and craft. Working with manufacturers or by hand, each artist investigates the liminal space where the familiar is reconfigured and placed in uncanny territory.

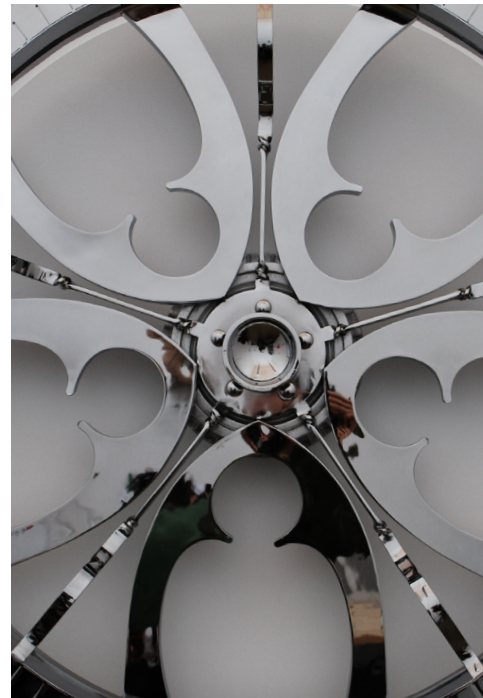
Like Ariadne, **Bland** weaves intricate patterns with her loom, adding and subtracting elements by cutting, gluing, sewing, and tying back together. Her reverence for vast, timeless forms and contrasting hand-constructed details compel the viewer to alternate between careful inspection and a gaze from afar. Patterns both large and minute are reflected through the symmetrical organization, emphasizing Bland’s interest in religious and cultural symbols as well as playing with space in perspectival, flattening, or illusionistic ways. The hybrid paintings hinge on polarities of warp and weft, rectilinear and round, and the tension of being held together and pulled apart.

**Petraitis** uses elements of sports, cars, and his urban surroundings to confound the viewer with shifts in material, deconstruction, and extraction from context. For instance, with “42s”, Petraitis makes a giant rim out of the expected material - chrome - but with the design of a rose window found in neighborhood churches. A fetishistic symbol of urban luxury is combined with its seeming opposite - an architectural nod to godliness- but its seamless union camouflages our need for ostentatious displays of wealth and power found in places high and low. His Brancusi-esque baseball bats are made to his specifications, their power nullified and sublimated into an elegant, quasi-feminine grace. In “Ball’n”, a basketball is deflated and reduced to its essential lines.

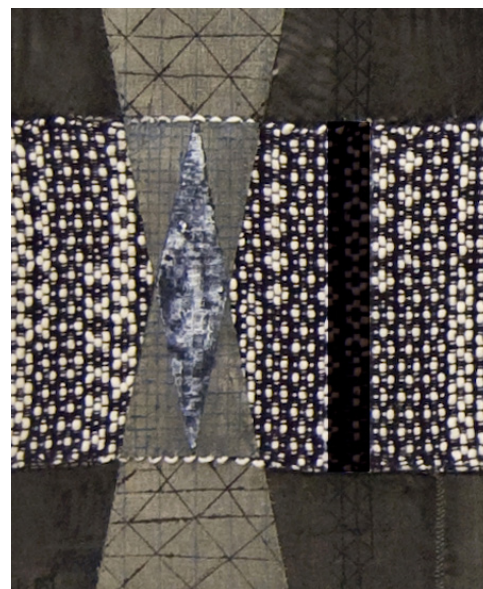
Bland and Petraitis surprise us with their unique interventions - whether in lending aggression to the fiber arts, or stillness to the violent and volatile.

**Julia Bland** earned her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2008 and her MFA from The Yale School of Art in 2012. She has exhibited in New York, Philadelphia, Providence, New Haven, Houston, Washington DC, Fez, and Tokyo. She has been an artist in residence at Yaddo and at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Julia Bland has received press in publications such as the *New Yorker*, the *New York Observer*, and *Mousse Magazine*, among others. She is the recipient of the Florence Leif Award and the Carol Scholsberg Memorial Prize for Excellence in Painting, and the Gelman Trust Travel Fellowship. Bland currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

**Daniel Petraitis** lives and works in his native city of Philadelphia. He received a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art, and an MFA from Tyler School of Art at Temple University in 2012. Petraitis’ work has been exhibited widely throughout Philadelphia including Vox Populi, Rebekah Templeton Contemporary, Projects Gallery, The Center For Emerging Visual Artists, Kelly Weber Fine Art, Little Berlin, and Bambi Gallery. He has shown at art fairs in Miami, New York, and Houston. Petraitis was awarded a 2013 residency at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and his work was recently acquired by the West Collection.



Daniel Petraitis, 42's, (Detail) 2011, Chrome plated fabricated steel, 42" x 42" x 7"



Julia Bland Untitled, (Detail) 2014, Oil, canvas, silk, wool and linen yarns, 86" x 85"