

Chadwick Rantanen

Essex Street, New York

For his first solo exhibition in New York, LA-based artist Chadwick Rantanen presents two new body of works: “Bins” and “Loops.”

In “Loops,” Rantanen focuses on nurse scrubs and their apparently innocuous printed motifs with animated characters. Strips of this fabric are wrapped around flexible carbon rods divisible into segments: each unit has been laboriously numbered and labeled with custom tags, mimicking the originals with warnings, material composition and washing instructions. Each loop has up to fifty parts, but a smaller amount can be used — assembled in ascending order — to match the dimensions of the walls. In the main space of the gallery, three loops are displayed: two on the front and side walls, and one coiled on the glass door entrance as an imposing yet subtle doorway. The three elliptical structures extend through the whole space and at the same time leave it almost empty. The flexible sculptures are not leaning against the wall but rather pressing against it: they simultaneously contain and are contained; they are barely visible and yet they expand to the very edge of the space, outlining and confronting its boundaries.

In the basement, a work from the “Bin” series is displayed at the center of the room, taking up most of the available space. It is composed of a grid-like display of transparent polypropylene bins with their lids — all standard, readymade containers. Each bin is full of water and contains a hydrographic film with a floating checkerboard motif that has become partially distorted in the water. At the same time, the pattern is amplified in the grid-like display of bins and lids as well as the grid pattern embossed upon the plastic surfaces.

In the back room, one more “Bin” is presented along with a “Loop” in a semi-square shape. This time each bin is stacked on another, and a fake water drop pattern generates an even more subtle overlap with the condensation of real water underneath.



Chadwick Rantanen, Bin, 2013. 8 polypropylene bins bottoms and 3 tops, hydrographic film, water, 152 x 51 x 42 cm. Courtesy the artist and Essex Street, New York.

Photo: Adam Reich

Bin, 2013. 11 polypropylene bins bottoms & 10 tops, hydrographic film, water, 330 x 190.5 x 20 cm. Courtesy the artist and Essex Street, New York. Photo: Adam Reich

by ELENA TAVECCHIA