

# TONI ROSS

## **No W here at Ricco/Maresca Gallery**

I am pleased to invite you to the opening of *No W here*, a collective exhibition featuring work by myself, Alice Hope, and Bastienne Schmidt, at Ricco/Maresca Gallery on June 3 from 4-8PM. We hope to see you there.

Ricco/Maresca Gallery  
529 W 20th St, New York, NY 10011  
June 3 – September 11, 2021

Opening Reception:  
Thursday, June 3, 2021  
4 – 8 PM



A Selection of Works by Toni Ross in *No W here* at Ricco/Maresca Gallery from June 3–September 11

## **No W here**

### **A Collective Exhibition Alice Hope, Toni Ross, Bastienne Schmidt**

*"Kwajalein is anything but the middle of nowhere...Kwajalein is, rather, the middle of both now and here, not nowhere but now-here."* – Greg Dvorak, Author of *Coral and Concrete*

The exhibition *No W here* opens June 3 and runs through September 11, 2021, at Ricco/Maresca Gallery in Chelsea. It is the grand debut for the collective of the same name, featuring artists Alice Hope, Toni Ross and Bastienne Schmidt. The artists share a deep friendship that has endured for more than 20 years and this is their first foray as a collective. The catalyst to their forming No W Here, and the resulting exhibition is based on a simple prompt that they agreed on; to select an artifact from the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and respond to it through their own artwork. Serendipitously, they each chose a Navigational Chart (Rebbilib) from the 19th-early 20th century. This map, and others like it, consists of delicately woven coconut palm fronds that form a grid of sorts. The sculptural object is minimal, and graphically simplistic. Its purpose was originally intended to instruct sailors of wave patterns and mark various locations of the Marshall Islands.

The selection of this particular object, fortuitous in nature, revealed an allegorical theme, previously unconscious, from which their new work is based: Navigation. Unexpectedly, COVID-19 ravaged much of the world. People retreated into their homes, stores shuttered their doors, restaurants closed, and for the first time in over a decade, planes weren't crossing the sky as often. Hope, Ross, and Schmidt sought answers beyond isolation from the communal experience, and an unpredictable nature of the virus. A quote from *Coral and Concrete*, a novel by Greg Dvorak published in 2018, in abbreviation, "...the middle of both now and here, not nowhere but now-here," resonated with them as they individually and collectively embraced this new normal. Entering their respective studios, they each explored their personal relationship to way-finding, anthropology, maps and the revelation of plotting a course. The resulting work that they've produced is varied in aesthetics and technique. Yet, it overlaps through the rawness of material and a penchant for the nautical. The element of seeking, locating, and connecting is the metaphorical X marks the spot, the golden nugget that has tied them together and strengthened their already existing bond.

Alice Hope has made free-standing sculptures consisting of fishing lines, ball chains, and Corona beer can tabs. Organized in cylindrical and rectangular shapes, the work hangs from the ceiling of the gallery, and could almost be compared at first glance to a fishnet, constructed of materials meant to be recycled. The physicality of her sculpture can be encountered, walked through, and divide the gallery as a dimensional curtain of sorts. Toni Ross' contribution includes a delicate, mixed media series of drawings on paper, as well as two hanging sculptural works made of string woven onto sturdy, repurposed wrought iron frames. One of her works in the show, actually graphs the movement of the Coronavirus as it spread in New York, California and Florida. In contrast to Hope's sculptures, these are contained, yet seemingly unruly at their core, taut and loose simultaneously.. The artist whose work is most directly responsive to the Navigation Chart (Rebbilib), is Bastienne Schmidt. Grids have been part of her practice for quite some time, and the work in *No W here* follows a similar geometric pattern, not unlike the one found in the Navigation Chart. On untreated canvas, she uses wooden sticks curved into patterns, in some instances interacting with a stitched, layered tailored canvas and in yet another, pigmented and tinted muslin sewn together. Hers is a map in the closest sense of the word, reminiscent of Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, stripped of color, and with less precise line structure. A commonality that they all share, is their collective desire to move through space, without the need to possess it. In each instance, the destination is here, the destination is now.

Rather than study wave patterns or chart directions to a particular land structure, No W here Collective have taken this opportunity to reference the exact moment we are all in. Looking forward, after experiencing the unprecedented, uncharted course that 2020 left in its wake, this exhibition relies on the power of art to locate. Art is a navigational compass, a destination without a shore. Conceptual at its core, a lighthouse at best, it has the power to remind someone of home, wherever that may be.