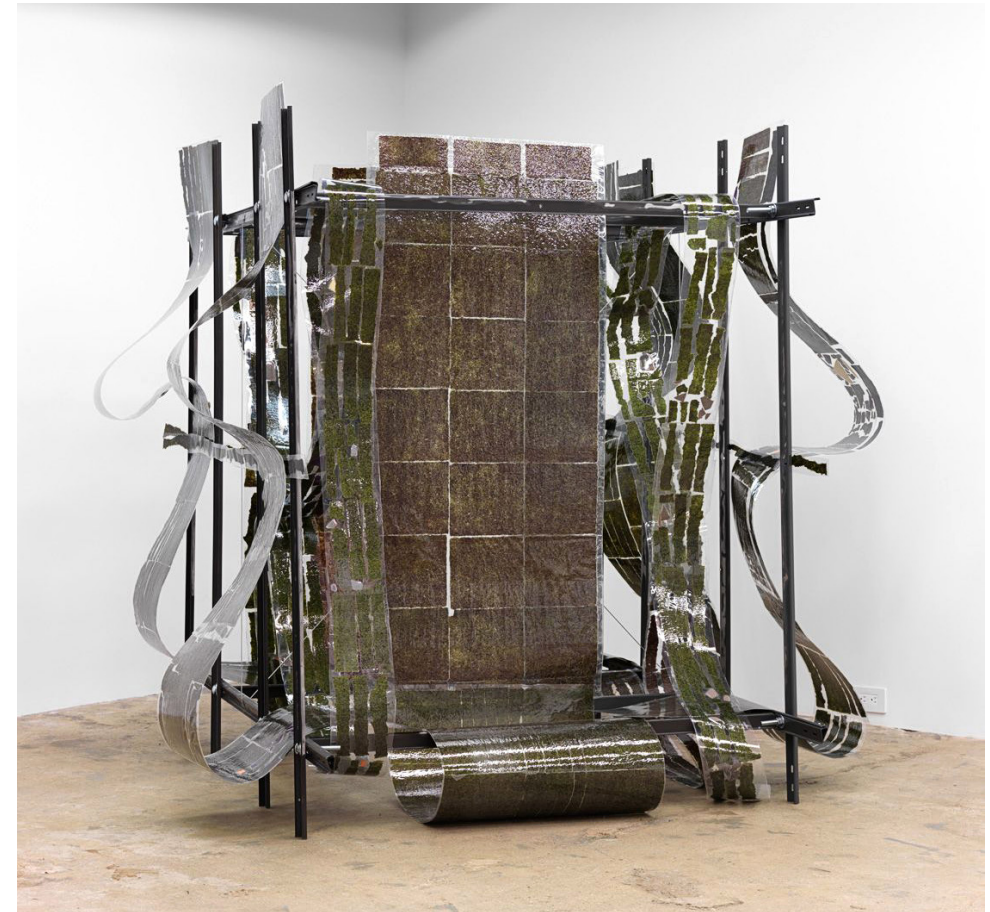

Compressed & Expanded: An Interview with Artist Anne Libby



Tessera, 2017
Powder coated steel, formica, laminate, seaweed
5.5' x 5.5' x 5.5'

I'm incredibly excited to feature Anne Libby's artwork in both our Los Angeles and our New York showrooms. Anne and I have exchanged studio visits and been fans of one another's work since we met in 2008, the same year as we sold our first Spinelli Kilcollin ring!

DWYER KILCOLLIN: In your work you've used folding plastic tables, used office window blinds, and sushi nori paper—how do such esoteric and diverse materials enter your vernacular?

ANNE LIBBY: I guess the thread that combines them all is that they are able to compress or are already compressed. While the idea of compression makes so much sense from an efficiency standpoint, I always find it odd, the moment when we touch these everyday things and unfold them into their specific use. I try and work from that starting point and draw out expressivity.

DK: The idea of compression makes so much sense! The Costco picnic table folds flat for ease and convenience, window blinds compact themselves when you draw the cord, and sushi paper has been compressed into a high-density sheet!

Many artists start with a vision, as though they can see the final artwork in their mind's eye, but I think your process starts differently—like you begin with a material and see where it leads you. Could you describe your creative process?

AL: Yes, exactly—I am often really interested in a material or a surface quality as a starting point. In the case of the nori, I was initially attracted to its transparency. I had been working with glass previously, and the way the light passed through the nori sheets stood out to me as looking like stained glass. But then of course it has these other references like that of actual seaweed, organic form, its being a global commodity and its symbolism of good health. But often it takes me a while to understand why

I'm interested or attracted to something. I've learned it's an instinct I just need to trust and see through because there is always something there that is generating that feeling.

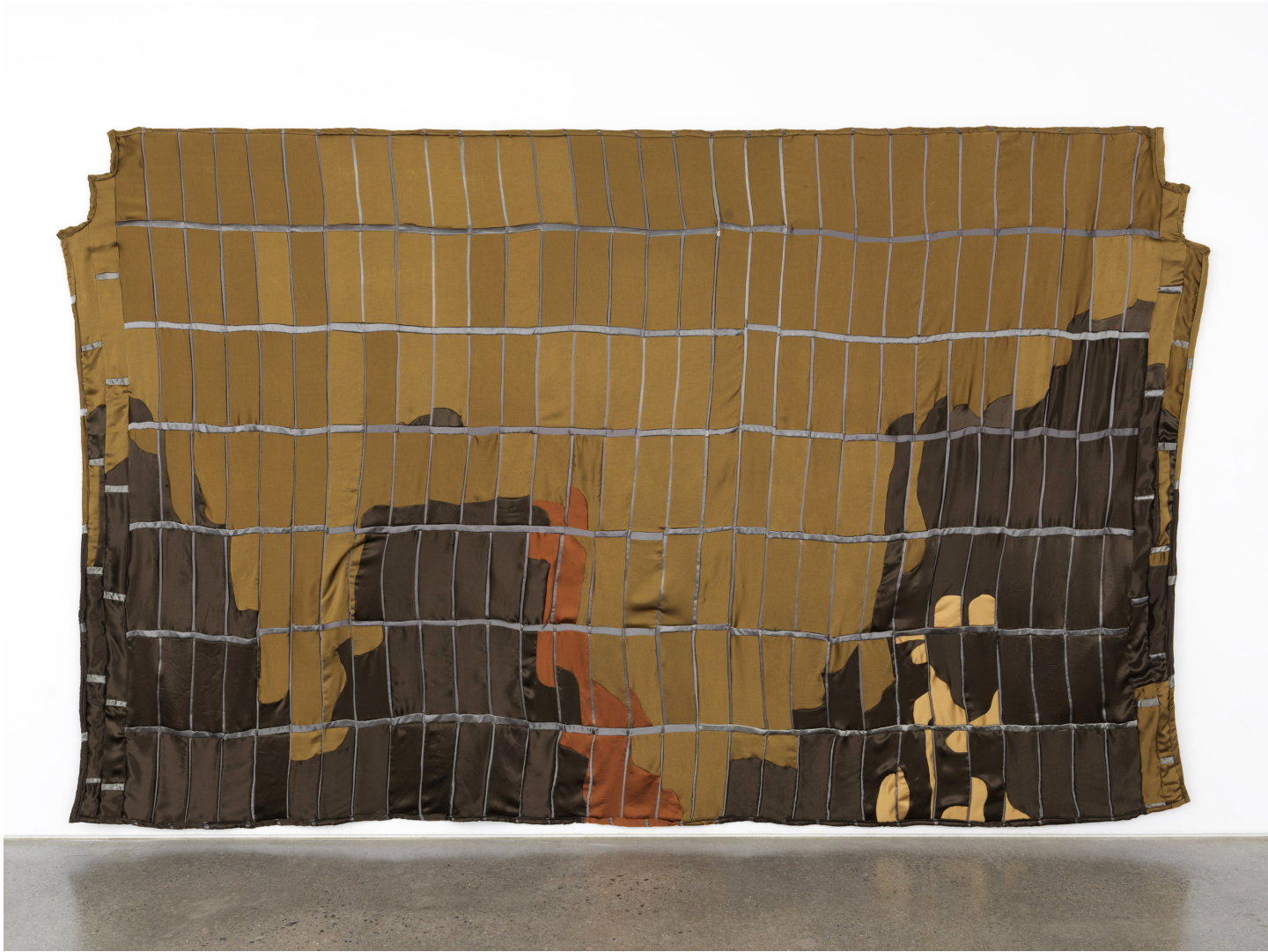
DK: Some of the images you've shared with us have no immediately appreciable origin point—they look like pure abstractions. And yet, because I've followed your work for a while now, I feel like I can see a through-line to the materials you first began investigating. For example, the rounded protrusions on this piece remind me of the perforated understructure you accentuated on the folding picnic table piece we currently have in our New York showroom.

AL: My work tends to be quite linear with one idea leading to the next. My abstractions often do have a starting point in something more real—specifically that oval pattern was pulled from investigations of the folding table's surface. But the pattern seemed to imply something important, both digital and like a fingerprint, and it's directional so it looks like a depiction of some kind of infrastructure. That's why I've continued to go back to it.

DK: It could almost be like a physical binary code, or a city seen from outer space! Are there any new materials sparking your interest right now?

AL: I've recently been doing a lot of work with fabric and with ceramics. With the fabric I have been interested in working with the format of the quilt. I came to it by

Sunset Gates, 2018, Polyester satin, batting, 10' x 5'

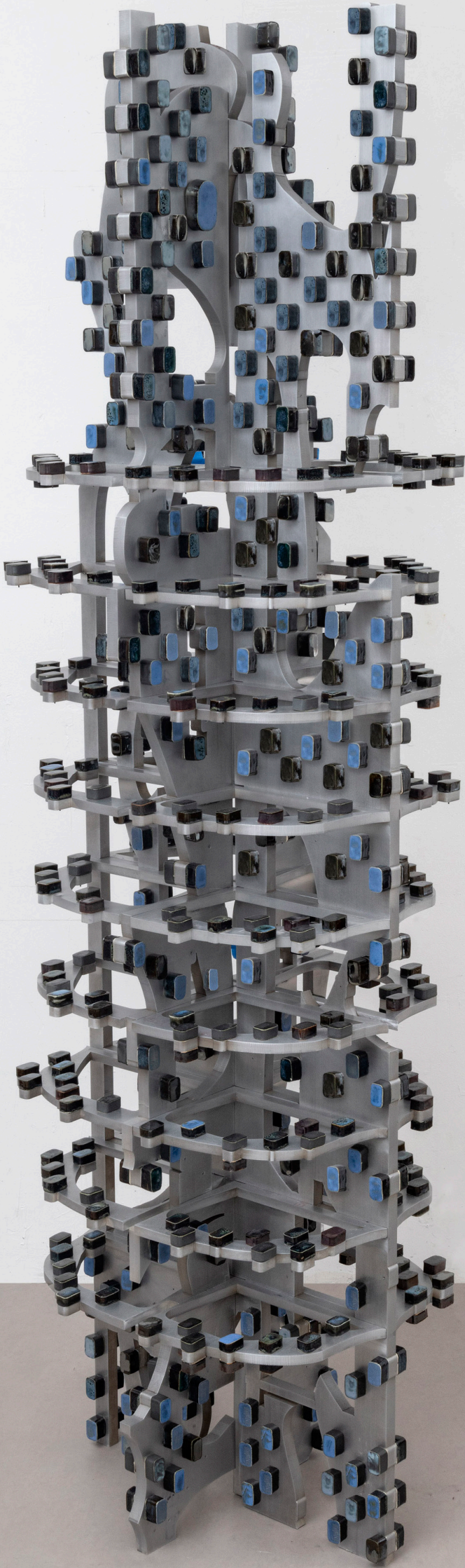


wanting to represent the optical phenomena of buildings reflecting on other buildings. I became interested in how a kind of intimate traditional craft could be paired with the look of contemporary urban development.

DK: That describes the new work we just installed in our Los Angeles office! I love how the satin fabric reproduces the effect of large-scale glass and even though it's in the more traditional form of a quilt, it still looks like its folding and unfolding on the wall, and harkens back to the materiality of the nori or the window blinds. I love this way you bring these materials that inspire you in and out throughout your practice.

You can see Anne's work yourself at both our New York and Los Angeles showrooms. Additionally, you can find her at Frieze Los Angeles with Night Gallery, February 14th-16th 2020. She will also have the first solo show of her work in London this coming spring at Soft Opening. She is represented by Magenta Plains, New York; Night Gallery, Los Angeles; and Ribordy Thetaz, Geneva. Contact us, dear@spinellikilcollin.com, Olivia@magentaplains.com, or William@nightgallery.ca for more information on Anne's work.

All images Courtesy Anne Libby and Magenta Plains, New York



Multiplexer II, 2019
Aluminum, glazed ceramic
6' x 2' x 14"