

5130 W. EDGEWOOD PL.  
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[www.davidkordanskygallery.com](http://www.davidkordanskygallery.com)

David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Andrea Büttner. The artist's first show at the gallery, as well as her first solo show in Los Angeles, it will open on September 9 and remain on view through October 22, 2016. An opening reception will be held on Friday, September 9 from 6:00pm until 8:00pm.

Andrea Büttner produces works in a variety of media, alternating between forms like the woodcut, which privileges the use of the hand and the rough interaction of materials, and research-based projects that delineate the broader art historical and cultural contexts in which her ideas circulate. Her concerns offer a bracing contrast from much contemporary artistic discourse, and yet they are urgently contemporary: she consistently revisits representations of poverty, religious iconography (with a focus on Catholic monastic traditions), and the enduring beauty of folk art forms. Büttner's exhibitions are populated with images and objects that are small, low, humble, and humorous. Little-known and underappreciated artists are often made visible in new ways, though the detectable presence of Western art's major narratives, as well as a willingness to question them, allow each work to resonate on numerous critical registers.

The current exhibition features a group of recent works that reveal the broad scope of Büttner's practice. An ongoing series of wall-based fabric pieces, for instance, are created from monochromatic lengths of material used to make civic workers' uniforms. Here, the artist covers over 50 linear feet of the gallery's walls, including one of its corners, with high-visibility yellow cloth of the sort worn by firefighters, paramedics, and other emergency personnel. The fabric highlights, humanizes, and softens the space, while acting as a support for another series of works that have been hung on top of it. It thereby calls attention to the crucial kinds of support provided by the workers who usually wear it, granting the background a place in the visual foreground and evoking the presence of laborers who, when called, emerge from relative inconspicuousness.

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The series of framed etchings installed on top of the fabric also emphasize color and texture, if by other means and for other reasons. Each reproduces a field of greasy fingerprints and smudge marks, a record of the swipes left behind on the screen of the artist's iPhone. These are gestural abstractions in the most literal sense. By turning to a traditional technique like etching, Büttner renders a precise portrait of the collaboration between a human and her technology in decidedly analogue fashion. She thereby displays a high level of detail in a warmer way than digital means make possible, and calls attention to the dirt and grime required to put the iPhone's otherwise clean aesthetic to use.

Such contrasts of color, form, and concept play an important role in Büttner's exhibitions, as do fundamental perceptual oppositions like warm and cool, rough and smooth, and light and dark. The iPhone etchings, therefore, offset the visceral impact of the selection of Büttner's woodcuts on view, particularly an unframed series of nine prints depicting images of beggars. Drawn (with an angle grinder) with consciously inelegant economy, their heads bowed beneath their hoods and their hands outstretched, the lump-like beggars nonetheless emerge from fields of black ink with a quiet and paradoxical dignity. They are at once hidden and completely vulnerable, so that the social and psychological questions they raise can also be read, in an art setting, as questions about what it feels like to display the products of one's private labor before a discerning and possibly judgmental audience. These themes are also present in a separate two-part woodcut in which street performers dressed in Donald and Daisy Duck costumes are observed in a moment of repose, with their duck heads detached from their bodies and their human heads exposed for all the world to see.

Another work related to the appeal for charity appears in the form of a long, very low steel table whose surface is covered with inkjet prints. The prints are divided into two complementary colors; each also contains two reproductions sourced from German art historian Aby Warburg's archive of iconology, which documents the transmission of symbolic visual

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information from antiquity through the Renaissance and beyond. One reproduction is an image strictly speaking (a photograph of a painting or work on paper), while the other reveals the back of the photograph, including the copyright and reference information used to classify it in the archive. The reproductions depict begging figures in the act of humbling themselves; it is no coincidence that Büttner has designed the table so that viewers must lower their own bodies to view them. A close look at the archival data reveals that the images were sourced by researchers from auction catalogues--an accidental expression of the division of wealth.

Dualistic themes are further iterated by the fact that the table does not stand alone. Another, identically formatted one accompanies it. However, in an echo of the yellow fabric seen on the gallery's wall, it is covered with a measure of blue cloth woven by Benedictine nuns, whose labors normally include the making of church paraments and priestly vestments. A third sculptural work, meanwhile, finds Büttner using similarly produced brown fabric to cover the backrest of an austere but welcoming bench with wooden boards for a seat and two plastic crates for legs. The vows of poverty taken by some monks and nuns engender an aesthetic minimalism, that, if only on the surface, is not wholly unrelated to the kind that represents a major strain in contemporary art and design.

Büttner has also made a number of works that locate the low and the humble in the natural world. She has long been interested in moss, for instance, a "primitive" plant form that produces neither fruit nor flowers, and is usually experienced by people underfoot. Here an enlarged fragment of moss, cast in plaster, assumes an outsize presence in the gallery. Büttner offers up the contours of this monochromatic lump, like those of a scholar's rock, for aesthetic contemplation. Valorizing the seemingly most minor of things, she questions the mechanisms by which we attribute beauty and significance at large.

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Andrea Büttner (b. 1972, Stuttgart, Germany) has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions in museums and institutions worldwide, including Kunsthalle Wien, Austria (through September 18, 2016); Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (2016); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2015); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2014); Tate Britain, London (2014); Walter Phillips Gallery, The Banff Centre, Canada (2014); National Museum Cardiff, Wales (2014); Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2014); MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2013); Whitechapel Gallery, London, and The Maramotti Collection, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2011); and Artpace, San Antonio, Texas (2011). Recent group exhibitions include Food: Ecologies of the Everyday, Triennial of Small Scale Sculpture, Fellbach, Germany (2016); British Art Show 8, venues in Leeds, Edinburgh, Norwich, and Southampton, United Kingdom (2015); Second Chances, Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (2015); DOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, Germany and Kabul, Afghanistan (2012); Brannon, Büttner, Kierulf, Kierulf, Klipper, Bergen Kuntshall, Norway (2012); and There is always a cup of sea to sail in, 29th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2010). Büttner lives and works in London and Frankfurt.

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