



**The Temporary Nature of Change
Mikey Cuddihy and Deborah Duffin**

Opening Sunday 24 October, 2 - 4pm

24 October - 28 November, 2021

Opening times during exhibitions:

Thursday - Friday 2 - 6pm, Saturday 12 - 4pm
or by appointment

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The Temporary Nature of Change: Mikey Cuddihy and Deborah Duffin

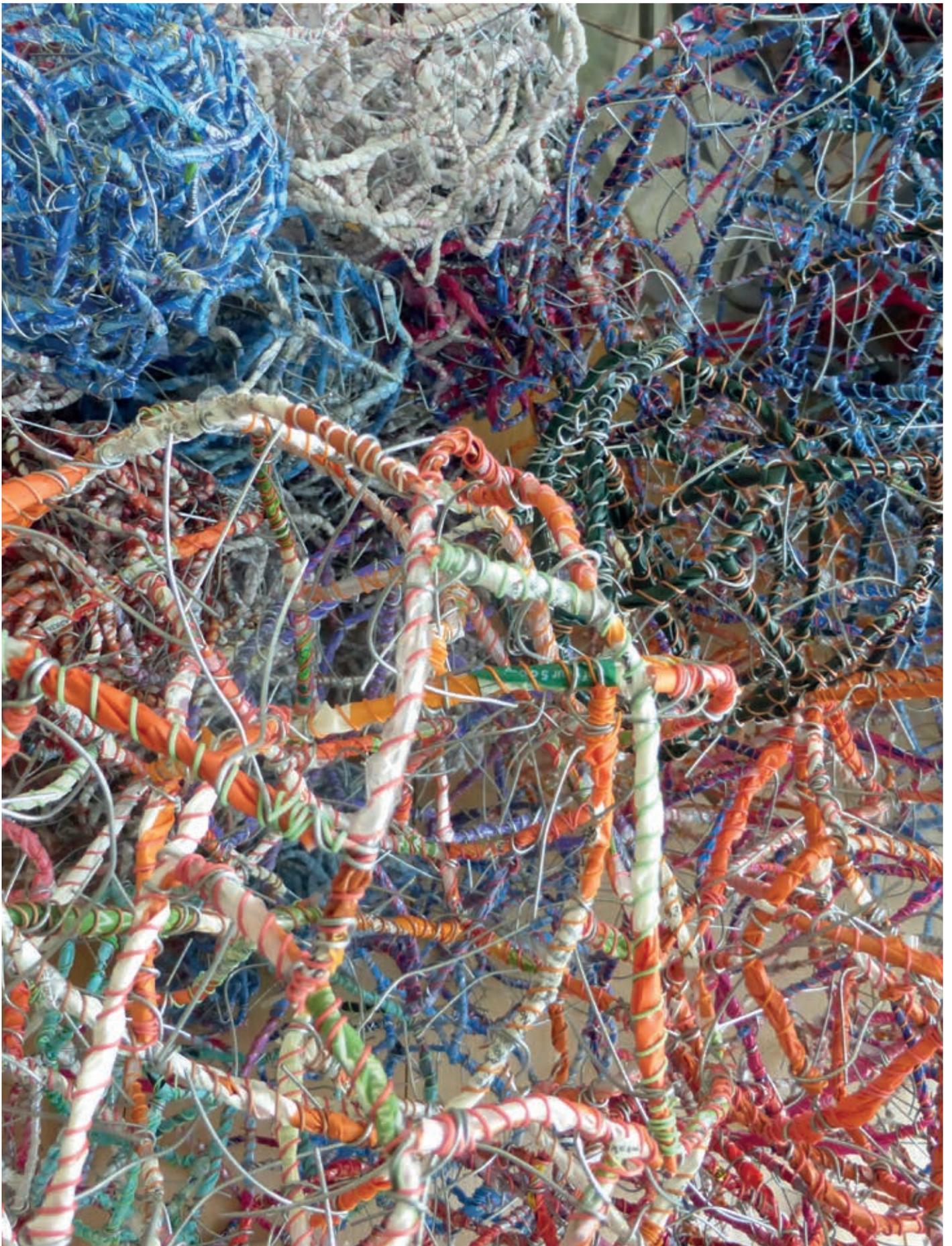
Mikey Cuddihy and Deborah Duffin use very different materials and while Cuddihy's painterly imagery leans more towards figuration than Duffin's sculptural abstractions, conceptually both are working on the idea of small, daily, one might imagine hourly changes and the temporary nature of stability and of change. Both artists are presenting a combination of new and previously exhibited works in an all new installation jointly conceived. Many of the works have been made in the artistic isolation all artists have been through over the recent Covid period, and those works reach out for an audience. The exhibition will be the first one for MOCA London since the total lockdown.

In an era where great change for women seemed solid, we have seen how temporary change can be, in Afghanistan as well as in America. Women and their hard fought rights are under attack again, and change we thought was foundational, is now seen for what it sadly is, temporary. Jefferson's words ring out with more urgency than ever that "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty".

Cuddihy's work is at once formal and also narrative. Her historic works were mainly large scale paintings on canvas featuring a personal calligraphy of forms. She has now transferred them onto newspaper, the pink paper of the Financial Times to be exact. That rosey glow, both masculine (alluding to finance - still a real realm of men), yet pink and feminine as a visual reference to women or at least girls, also has printed on top of it, the events of the day. Cuddihy uses her calligraphic forms to highlight daily narratives by drawing on, blacking out and carving into sensuous shapes the pages of many yesterdays. Cuddihy says "My work sits at an intersection between the political and the decorative." In the 1970s the slogan The personal is political (popularised by Carol Hanisch) became widely used to describe how women, often forced into the domestic sphere could bring about first personal, then societal change.

Duffin also shows us the domestic side of work, but seemingly gone wrong. Her sculptures are made of wire and plastic and things that get thrown away, and have found themselves collected in her studio awaiting her touch. Duffin makes hundreds of discrete objects often rough spheres that pile one on top of the other like dust balls in a rainbow of colours. Other works look like cobwebs made by spiders on narcotics. Both seem to await a woman to sweep them away or at the very least tidy them up. They speak of the domestic work women have traditionally had to do, and like a cobweb appear to be temporary structures. Duffin says that 'drawing is the essence of my work; I see drawing as an approach to the world - an attitude of mind rather than a specific activity'. She uses wire to draw in three dimensional space as much as Cuddihy uses paint and paper. Duffin often reworks pieces into new sculptures and installations as at MOCA.

Women in the 1960s often rebuffed materials linked to the masculine (bronze, marble, steel) and turned to those found in the home, often for practical reasons as their incomes were and still are, lower than their male counterparts. They subverted the way women were viewed by patriarchal curators who thought "little women" were not up to the job of 'real' sculpture or painting. Cuddihy and Duffin, whose practice started in the late 70s benefited from that new freedom, but also helped make that change and press it forward as part of the emergence of the East End art scene in the 1980s, where women played an essential role. They have made it easier for those who are following on, by continuing to make amazing work. Institutional memory is often fleeting and slippery, and we must remember that change is only ever in the now. Good can be overthrown by bad as quickly as a broom sweeps clean.



Deborah Duffin



Mikey Cuddihy