

# ARTFORUM

## *Leonor Antunes at The Fruitmarket Gallery*

by Susannah Thompson (August 10, 2023)



Leonor Antunes, *The homemaker and her domain II*, 2022, bamboo, brass fixtures, cherry wooden shelves, rope, brass, polyethylene foam, pinatex, nylon yarn straw, silk, leather. Installation view. Photo: Nick Ash/kurimanzutto/Marian Goodman Gallery.

In Leonor Antunes's show "the apparent length of a floor area," visitors wander slowly beneath and between a rich array of textures and techniques that commemorate women designers overlooked by the modernist canon. Antunes has titled each work to accredit its dedicatee, often using their first names in a playful nod to the historic trivialization of female artists. A series of low tables in glazed ceramic and lacquered wood, "Charlottes," 2021, is based on an unrealized design by Charlotte Perriand. In *Sadie & Sophie # 2*, 2023, talismans of wood and beaded yarn pay homage to British architect Sadie Speight and Swiss artist-designer Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Cork floors inlaid with colored linoleum invoke 1930s rug designs by British architect and designer Marian Pepler, while in *Lena #9*, 2023, the signature motifs of Bauhaus designer Lena Bergner are echoed in gauzy brass wire draped over a metal beam. Such elegant abstractions are also acts of translation: Tufted wool becomes cork and lino, handrails are transfigured as hanging sculptures, and are thus reinscribed as Antunes's work.

Yet for all their tasteful restraint and gorgeous production values, Antunes's associative objects also summon less high-brow impressions: Her ropes and chains could be the supersized props of a fetishist; the bamboo frames and nets, structures of a bespoke tree-top adventure or modernist playground. Women artists beyond modernism are also recalled in works such as *Franca (#5)*, 2018, whose rattan and hemp rope bear traces of Sheila Hicks's "thread-things," Lenore Tawney's sculptural "woven forms," or a tauter, tighter manifestation of what Glenn Adamson described as the "hippy, hairy" aesthetic and "wonky flaccidity" of 1960s Fiber Art. The cork floor is the installation's stand-out element. Referencing traditional materials of Antunes's native Portugal and midcentury modernist interiors, it is warm and tactile underfoot, transforming the space and unifying the hanging sculptural works that reach and fall toward it.