

Aspen Art Museum
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Educator Notes



Installation view: Alice Channer, *Rockfall*, 2015. Courtesy the artist, Lisa Cooley, New York, and The Approach, London. Photo: Tony Prikryl

Alice Channer *Rockfall*

February 13–May 31, 2015

About the artist

Alice Channer was born in Oxford, England, and currently lives and works in London. She received a BA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College and an MA in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art, both in London. She often creates sculptures and mixed media works that explore our relationship to materials, ranging from metal and concrete to textiles and paper. Her work has been shown internationally and is in collections such as the Arts Council Collection and the Tate Permanent Collection.



Installation view: Alice Channer, *Rockfall*, 2015. Courtesy the artist, Lisa Cooley, New York, and The Approach, London. Photo: Tony Prikryl

About the exhibition

For her first solo museum exhibition in the US, Channer presents *R o c k f a l l*, a newly commissioned outdoor sculpture. For the last few years, Channer has been collecting fragments of concrete around her studio in London, remnants of the continual construction projects that shape the urban environment. The artist takes these “human-made rocks,” all small enough to fit in her backpack, back to her studio to create 3-D scans that are stretched out digitally up to six feet. The new forms are then carved by a CNC router (computer-controlled cutting machine) into foam in order to create molds for different materials.

Channer reprogrammed the CNC’s standard tool path of short vertical marks so that it created longer horizontal grooves that accentuate the stretching effect of these pieces. The grooves also create a fabriclike appearance that results from the careful capturing of subtle curves and variations, as if soft pieces of corduroy were draped over unusual rocklike objects.

This softness created by the CNC’s movements is juxtaposed with the three materials that the artist chose to use for the casts: aluminum, concrete, and Cor-Ten

steel. All used in industrial production—calling to mind the location where the original objects were found—these materials also create unique sensations: not only through their different colors and textures, but also because they each convey varied senses of speed and movement. Playing with our perception of time, the pieces appear as though they were moving faster than we would have been able to grasp, but have been frozen by the artist. AAM Curator Courtenay Finn notes that “unlike in the natural world, where things slow down as they increase in size, the urban landscape speeds up as it grows, racing farther and farther ahead.”

R o c k f a l l is installed in the museum’s Roof Deck Sculpture Garden, in direct relationship with the vertical rise of the adjacent mountains. As the title suggests, there is movement in these human-made rocks that invites us to consider not only how we physically experience Channer’s manipulation of materials and forms, but also how we relate to ever-changing urban and rural environments.



Questions for discussion

- | How would this sculpture look if it were installed vertically?
- | If you imagine this sculpture in motion, how does it move?
- | Why do you think the artist chose concrete, aluminum, and Cor-Ten steel as the materials of this sculpture? What other materials would you use if you were the artist?

Suggested activities

Distorted Drawings

- | Discuss the idea of elasticity with students: what has the capacity to stretch in our everyday lives? What happens when you change the form of something?
- | Ask students to pick a familiar object that is hard or heavy, either man-made or from nature.
- | Have students sketch the object as they see it initially. Then practice drawing it imagining that the object could be stretched to twice its size.



Alice Channer, *Rockfall*, 2015 (detail). Courtesy the artist, Lisa Cooley, New York, and The Approach, London. Photo: Tony Prikryl

For more information, please contact the Education Department at 970.925.8050 ext. 133 or email education@aspenartmuseum.org.

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