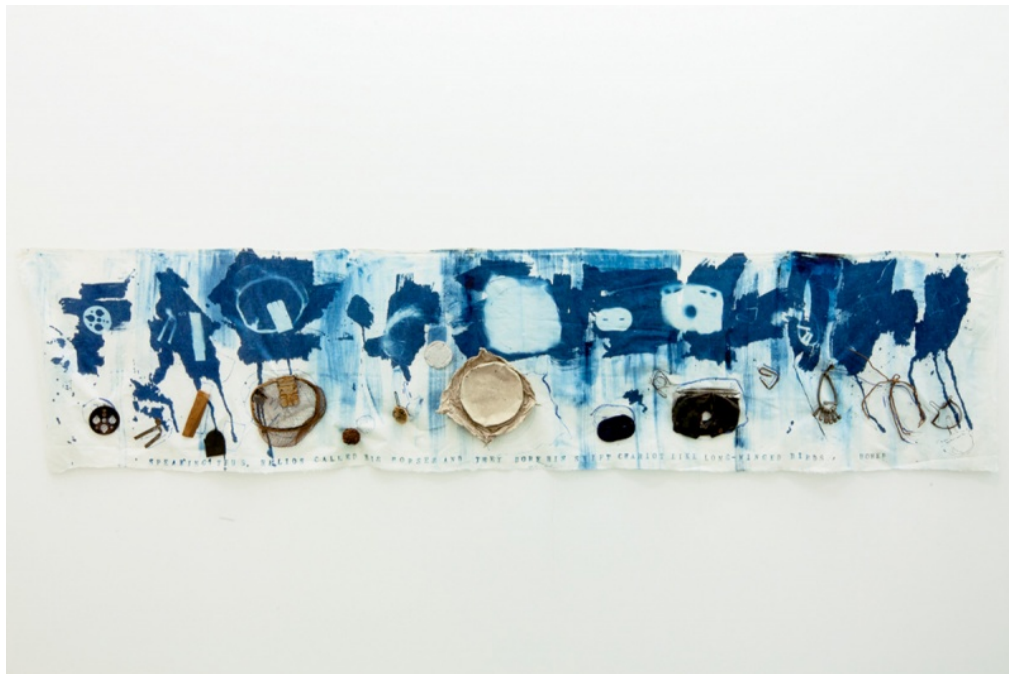


Alison Knowles

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James Fuentes
By Amanda Parmer
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At first glance, Alison Knowles's exhibition "Clear Skies All Week" looked to be historical, and in many ways it was. Although all the works date from 2003 to 2010, they incorporate used and found materials that the artist has collected from her life in SoHo over the past 40 years, fusing her early experience as a founding member of Fluxus with moments in her contemporary everyday. It is this mixing together of the past and the present that was most significant as one engaged the show.

The works were arranged into three discrete groups: hanging, vertical amalgamations of found objects; large, roughly rectangular forms of hand-molded paper pulp; and framed collections of personal items. For the four vertical "Event Threads," telephone cords, brightly colored rope, branches, baseballs and small plastic tags inscribed with text are bound together by string and flax. Each piece effectively transcends its individual elements to create a new form.

The four molded paper pieces combine shapes and materials evocative of a particular place or personal memory. The long, horizontal *Greene Street* (2003), for example, is an assemblage of objects unearthed by Knowles on SoHo's Greene Street as it was being repaved in the '90s. They are affixed in a row on the paper and, above each object, its image is reproduced using a cyanotype photogram process, leaving blue stains and markings around the negative shape. Redolent of nonlinear time and non-hierarchical

representations, the work particularly demonstrates the Fluxus agenda, which was to collapse boundaries between the art object and the framing device that marks it as such.

In turn, this Fluxus resolve sheds light on Knowles's use of personal artifacts. Well-worn slippers, shoe heels, scattered beans and sentimental proverbs were arranged into small groupings in six handmade frames hung along one wall of the gallery. The use of slippers and parts of shoes recalls her early Fluxus performance *Shoes of your choice* (1963), in which she asked audience members to come to the stage and describe a pair of shoes, the ones they were wearing or another of their choice. According to the artist, the beans scattered on the pages among the shoes, spilling into the words, pay homage to the many communal meals of lentils she shared with friends in New York over the years. Each of the proverbs reflects on relationships, such as "a rolling stone gathers no moss," "takes one to know one" and "alike as two peas in a pod." These framed works, reminiscent of Fluxus boxes, or Fluxkits, insist upon dismantling the way in which the "artwork" is set apart from the everyday language of life by drawing an equivalence between the finished piece and its signifier as a reified object: the frame.

Photo: Alison Knowles: Greene Street, 2003, found objects and cyanotype on muslin, 25 by 110 inches; at James Fuentes