
The exhibition showcases the new series of works by American artist Josh Blackwell (b. 1977), featuring his transformed plastic bags known as ‘Neveruses’ (or “never uses”). Trained as a painter, Blackwell has been collecting discarded plastic bags from city streets, kitchen cupboards, trunks of cars, and many other places since the mid-2000s, to use them as ‘substrate and armature’ for his unlikely combinations of colorful wool yarn, silk thread, and patterned cloth. Considering every embellishment applied and every embroidery stitch sewn into the surface of his plastic bags to be proxies for painterly mark-making, Blackwell intervenes into the form of the plastic bag— a globally ubiquitous symbol of capitalist waste, to create gorgeous, geometrically abstract compositions that intermix color, texture, and pattern. Inspired by historical sources as varied as the Italian futurists and folk or outsider artists native to the American South, Blackwell’s artworks address contemporary themes as environmentalism, excess, utility, and (re)use with a fresh and playful sense of experimentation. His works in this exhibition have additionally made their way into collaborative installations, photographs, performances, and dance projects that further explore the limitless potential of the material.