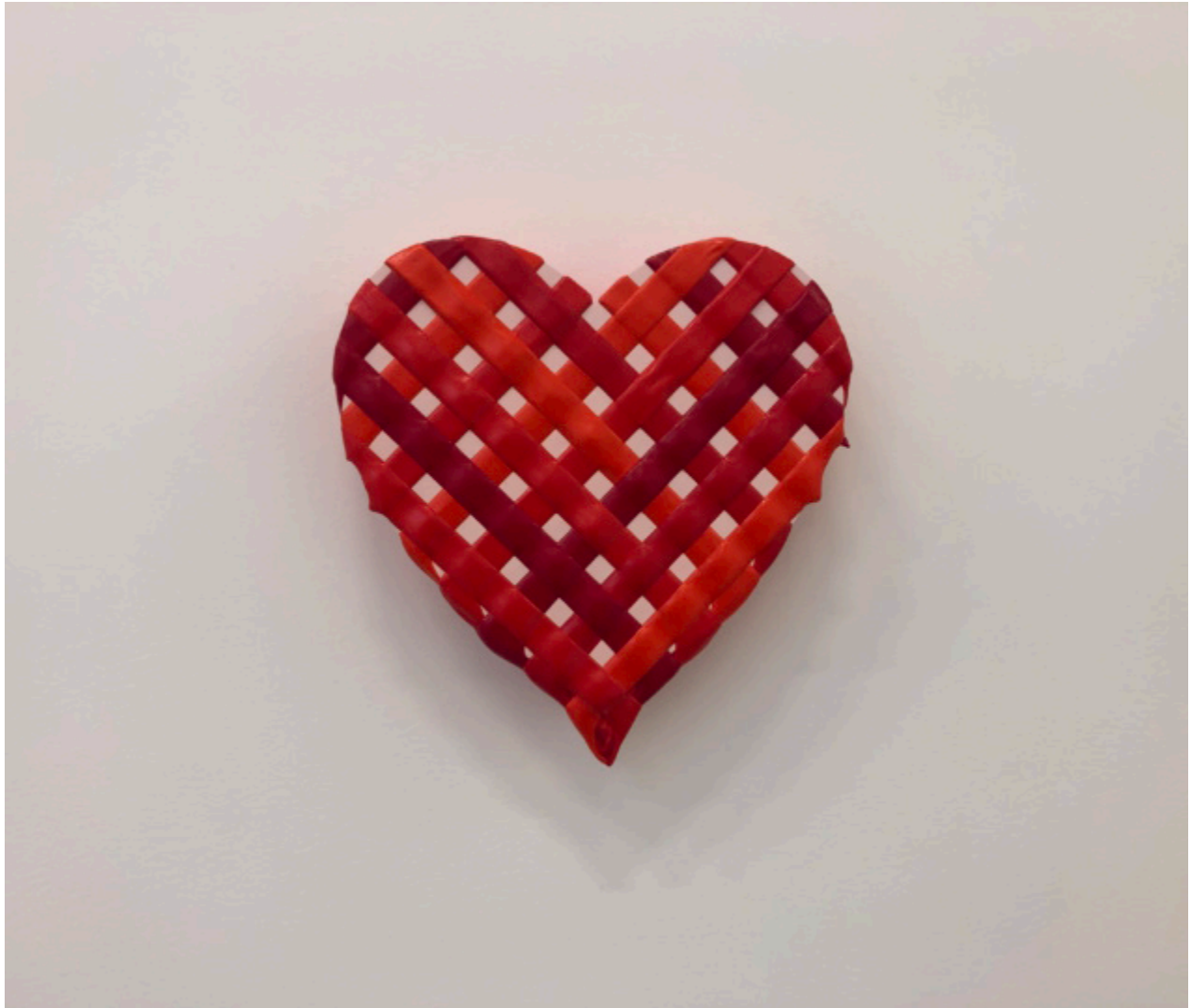


HYPERALLERGIC

A Painter's Sincere Affection for the Heart Ideogram

Linda Stark lends serious attention to the heart symbol, which, like most symbols associated with women and femininity, is easily dismissed and oft-overlooked.

By Jennifer Remenchik | October 19, 2020



Linda Stark, "Valentine" (2020), oil on panel, 7 x 7 x 1 3/8 inches (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic)

LOS ANGELES — Artist Linda Stark's aptly titled *Hearts* provides a luscious, if somewhat repetitive, inaugural exhibition for David Kordansky Gallery's newly expanded Mid-City space. As the title suggests, Stark's paintings celebrate the heart ideogram in a multitude of ways. Especially striking are two sculptural pieces cut into actual heart shapes, "Perylene Heart Weave" and "Valentine" (both 2020). Painted in a way that culls to mind images of a besotted lover painstakingly icing a cake for the object of their affection, the paintings are tipped-off, so to speak, with braided pieces of paint at their ends, creating blink-and-you'll-miss-it clitoral shapes carefully crafted into the work.



Linda Stark, "Bleeding Hearts" (2020), oil on canvas over panel, 12 1/4 x 12 x 2 inches

Some paintings are directly political, such as "Suffragette" (2019), in which Stark paints the crest of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, while others adopt more mutable, open-ended meaning, like "Fly Paper Heart" (2014), which sees Stark coating a layer of oil paint atop flypaper, marked with actual flies in the shape of — you guessed it — a heart.

Easily dismissed and oft-overlooked — as are most symbols associated with women and femininity — the heart symbol is treated with serious attention, as well as sumptuous, painterly details that will keep both the sociopolitically minded and formal painting enthusiasts happy (a rare feat). Even more endearing? The exhibition's absence of any reference to emoticons.