



or ego, a soul that is at one with Brahman, or the universal absolute. In these pieces, Tàpies uses the mysteriousness of abstraction to contemplate the mystery of religion. The correspondence was magnified in the quiet hush of the museum, a secular version of a temple or meditation room. The boldness of works such as *Atman* and *Embolcall* starkly contrasted with *Pila de mantes* (*Pile of Blankets*), a sober stack of institutional-style gray blankets, and *Cubell*, a metal bucket painted with a white cross and filled with somber-looking fabric.

Not only has Tàpies's work served as an important inspiration for other modern and contemporary artists, his resistance to categorization (painter or sculptor, two or three dimensions) represents a hybridization that still feels fresh. Interestingly, PAMM concurrently exhibited *WasteAfterWaste*, an explosive, playful installation of garbage and used objects created by Argentine-born Diego Bianchi. This new work demonstrated Tàpies's far-ranging influence and how the Dada movement continues to inspire artists who choose to work with discarded objects and readymades.

—Ann Albritton

CHICAGO

Barbara Cooper
Perimeter Gallery

In an age when creating the next new thing is pervasive, Barbara Cooper, a Chicago-based sculptor, offers a refreshing take on art, with nature as her starting point. Rather than compete with nature, she evoked its depths by using repurposed materials in her recent exhibition, "Repur-

posing: Small Sculpture." The results were striking. Cooper, who has worked with wood veneer since the late 1980s, "finds the world of nature to be one that creates a sense of awe...it provides a model of how to be in the world." Her sculptures, with their repurposed materials, not only incorporate themes of growth and decay, development and transformation, they also echo those themes back to the viewer, underscoring how natural processes underpin human life.

Descending the staircase, viewers entered a small, dimly lit room filled with eight of Cooper's wood sculptures, made between 2011 and 2015. Intimate, contemplative, and devoid of distractions, this lower-level gallery was a key feature of the exhibition, and it worked to Cooper's benefit. Its welcoming environment created an ideal place to visually explore and intellectually engage with the work—an array of sculptures, some on plinths, others on walls, all of them maintaining Cooper's laudable commitment to handcraft. Tactile qualities added to the aesthetic aspect: many pieces included a juxtaposition of smooth and coarse. In *Channel*, for example, wavy, rugged layers of wood emerge from a refined exterior. Cooper's works not only delight the eye with their undoubted beauty, but also intrigue the mind by tacitly encouraging thinking and discovery.

One joy of the show was how the work changed in response to differ-

ent viewing angles. According to Cooper, "sculpture should entice you to move around it by revealing something different on all sides." *Mantel*, placed on a plinth, validates this principle. From one view, it appears to contain three circular shapes melded together; another angle reveals a burgeoning interior tightly filled with thin layers of wood surrounding a burl. Or take *Volute*, a wall-hung piece that emanates expansive shadows when seen head-on. A step to either side reveals the irregularities of its wound form—one side more bulbous than the other.

It was helpful to recall the show's title when exploring the work. The act of repurposing is at the heart of Cooper's practice. Although she has

long used veneer scraps from the wood industry, this body of work also includes parts from previous sculptures and burls found around Chicago. As Cooper puts it, "Th[ese] pieces were responses to found form...I was responding to and improvising on these parts and trying to find a way to make a new 'whole' from them." That "whole" begins with nature. This meditative show propelled viewers on a journey of life, growth, death, destruction, and transformation, one that continued outside the gallery and made the world look just a bit different.

—Amy Haddad

NEW YORK

Nicola L.

Elga Wimmer Gallery

Nicola L., a French-born, New York-based sculptor of considerable talent, who has won recognition over a period of decades, recently restaged "Atmosphere in White," a comprehensive show of her work originally presented at the Liverpool Biennial



Above: Barbara Cooper, *Twine*, 2014. Wood and burl, 15 x 38 x 9 in. **Right:** Nicola L., *Atmosphere*, 2005. Transparent cotton, 120 x 90 in.