

Lyse Lemieux's work is often described as propelled by drawing and balanced between figuration and abstraction. But it is the artist's material handling of line and form that is key to understanding her process. For Lemieux, drawing is a three-dimensional practice: she uses found fabric, black felt, and dressmaker's shears to draw as often as she does ink—"I need to hold the line in my hands," she explains. In this way, the artist's process is inseparable from the forms she creates, which almost always reference the human figure. But while the artist's compositions might suggest something figural, they conjure the body by proxy: through its scale and the garments that have clothed it. She is deeply aware of the significance of clothing, the way it declares or masks our subject positions, binds and liberates us. Never before exhibited, Lemieux's series Bundled Drawings for an Odradek (2018) extend her drawn work with fabric into sculptural form. Knotted, twisted, and bound, with tongues of felt and remnants of fur, the compositions refer in title to the cryptically described creature-object at the focus of Franz Kafka's short story "The Cares of a Family Man," published in 1919. Like Kafka's Odradek, Lemieux's Bundled Drawings appear as though they "once had some sort of intelligible shape" but are now only, as Kafka writes, "broken-down remnants." At the same time, however, they are in their own way "perfectly finished." The figure of the Odradek has been interpreted in numerous ways, from representation of a commodity object, to religious talisman, to Sigmund Freud's "return of the repressed." For Lemieux, the Bundled Drawings—as perhaps likewise the Odradek—are lodged enigmatically somewhere between thought and form, their wadded mass seemingly carrying all that their former bodies once hosted.

- Kimberly Phillips