

# ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS | New York

Nene Humphrey

LESLEY HELLER GALLERY

54 Orchard Street

January 10–February 18



**Nene Humphrey, *Transmission* (detail), 2018**, mixed media, dimensions variable.

Nene Humphrey's *Circling the Center*, 2008–, an ongoing homage to her late husband, the artist Benny Andrews, has an apt title for an investigation into the ways death and grief affect the body and mind. Initiated two years after Andrews's death, this project approaches its weighty subject at oblique angles. Her installation here, *Transmission*, 2018, is the latest iteration of this tribute, which features, among other things, a video of performers weaving mourning braids.

Humphrey's immortal coils—unlike delicate Victorian mourning braids, which were made from corpses' hair—are constructed from wire, a material that affords them both durability and scalability. Masses of these plaited objects, created through a string of residencies, workshops, and performances, are mounted on the gallery's walls. Bird's-eye footage of a weaver's hands is projected onto a scrim. Above some toadstool-shaped looms in the main gallery is black-and-white braiding footage interspersed with video of neural activity in the amygdala, where emotions are processed. Humphrey has also mapped the nervous systems of lab rats for the series "Slowspin Frame," 2017–, a group of cloudy, loosely rendered charcoal drawings that bear a resemblance to the artist's coils (she has access to such data as a longtime artist-in-residence at NYU's Center for Neural Science). Humphrey's show is befittingly enigmatic and inconclusive. Just as there is no one way to grieve, there is no single, "correct" response to the pain of others. Humphrey's engaging offering here is wisely attuned to this.

— Cat Kron

Kron, Cat. "Critics' Picks New York: Nene Humphrey" *Artforum*, 26 January, 2018. [online]