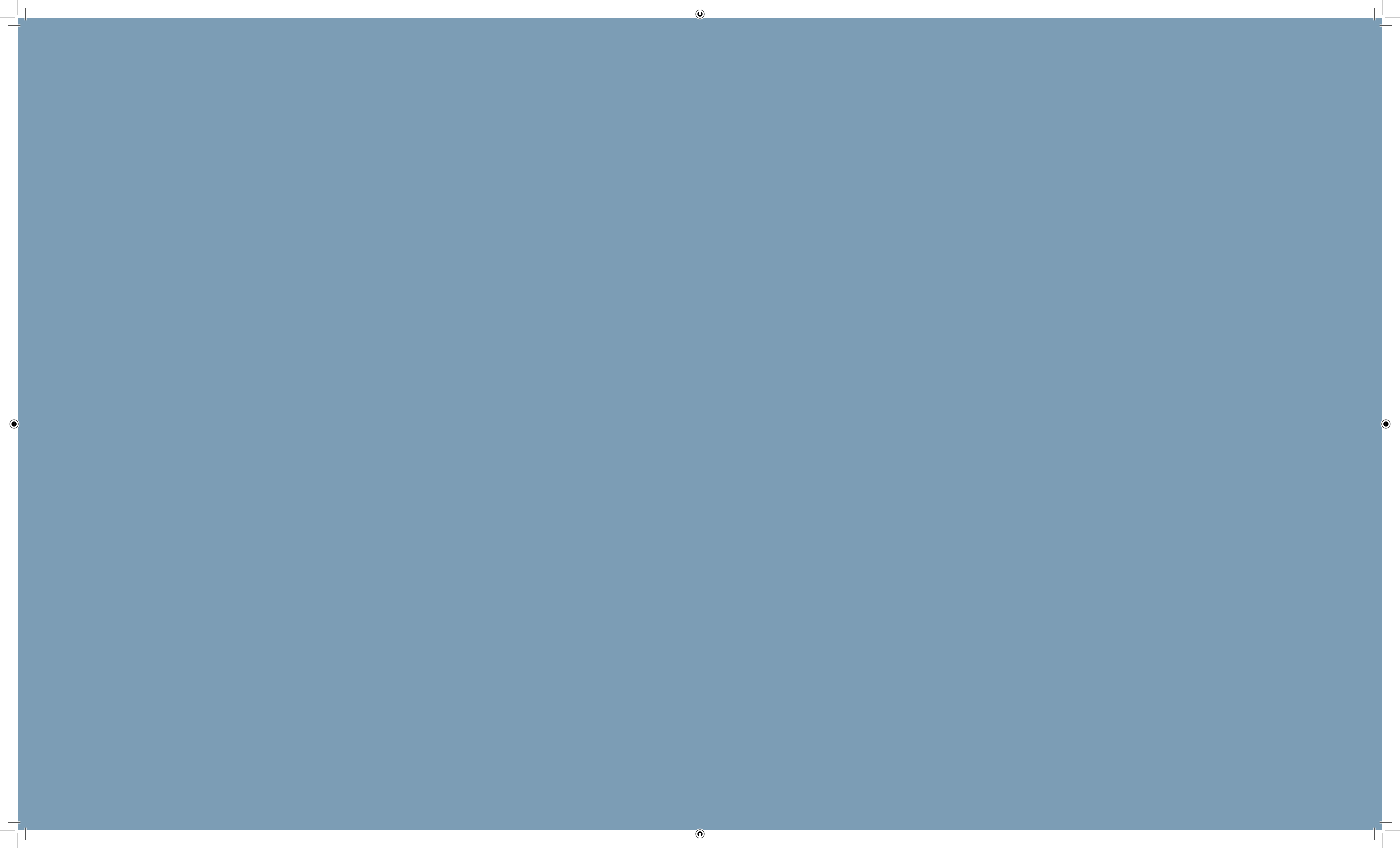


Addie Langford  
Works





# Addie Langford Works

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Addie Langford: Works was designed by Cece McGuire; texts were edited by Michael Stone-Richards; project manager, Isabella Aschenbach.

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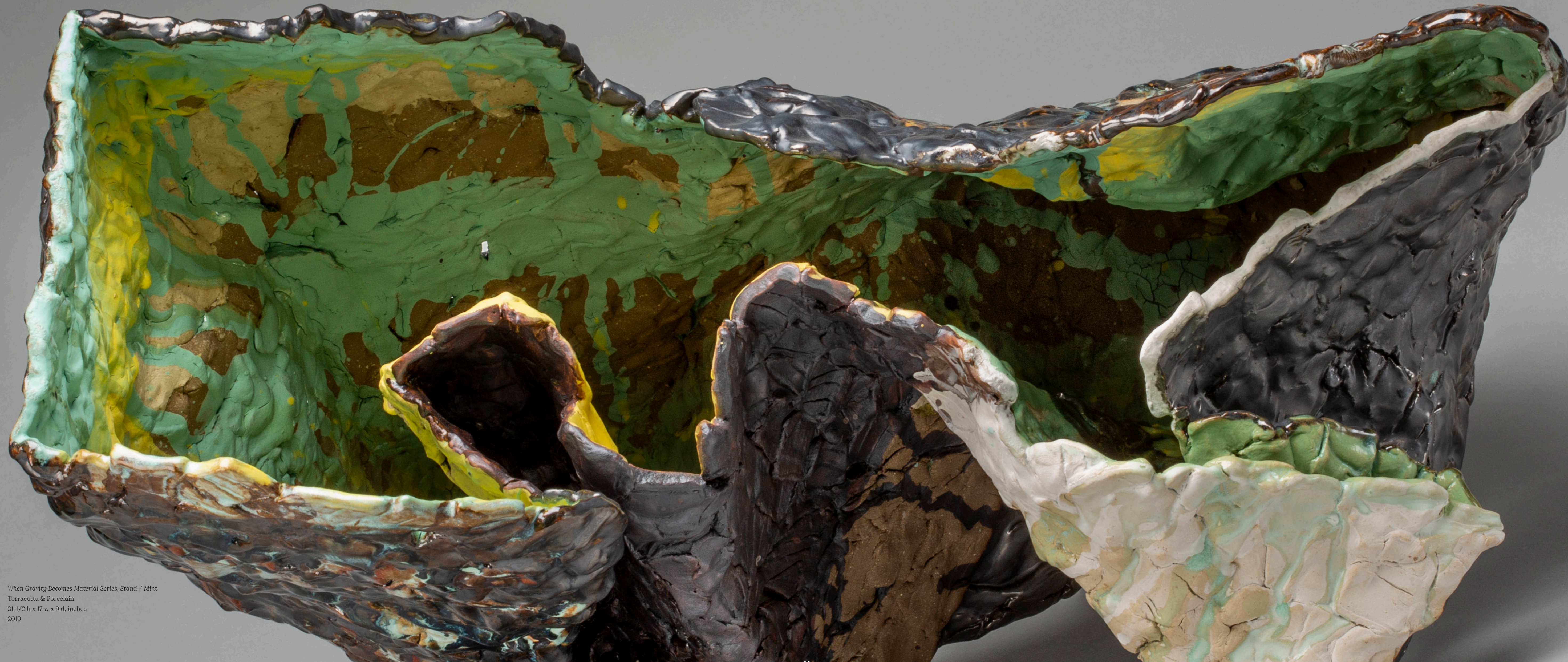
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*Phthalo Green/ Après- Coup III*  
Stoneware and Terra Cotta  
21 h x 26.5 w x 18 d, inches  
2018





*When Gravity Becomes Material Series, Stand / Mint*  
Terracotta & Porcelain  
21-1/2 h x 17 w x 9 d, inches  
2019





*Hanging Gardens I*  
Acrylic, ink, and collage on gessoed paper mounted on linen  
55 h x 100 w, inches  
2011

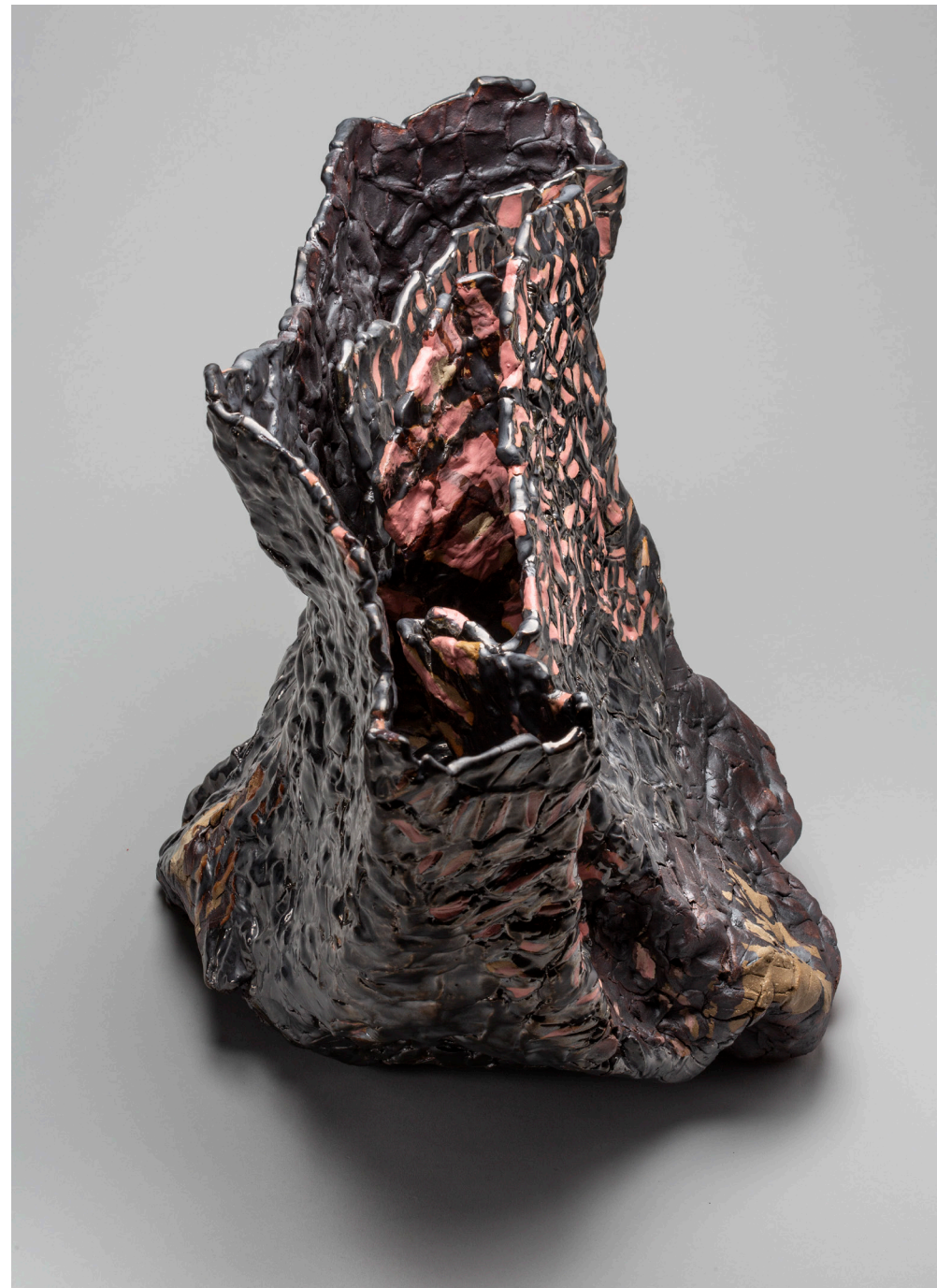


*Hanging Gardens II*  
Acrylic, ink, and collage on gessoed paper mounted on linen  
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2011

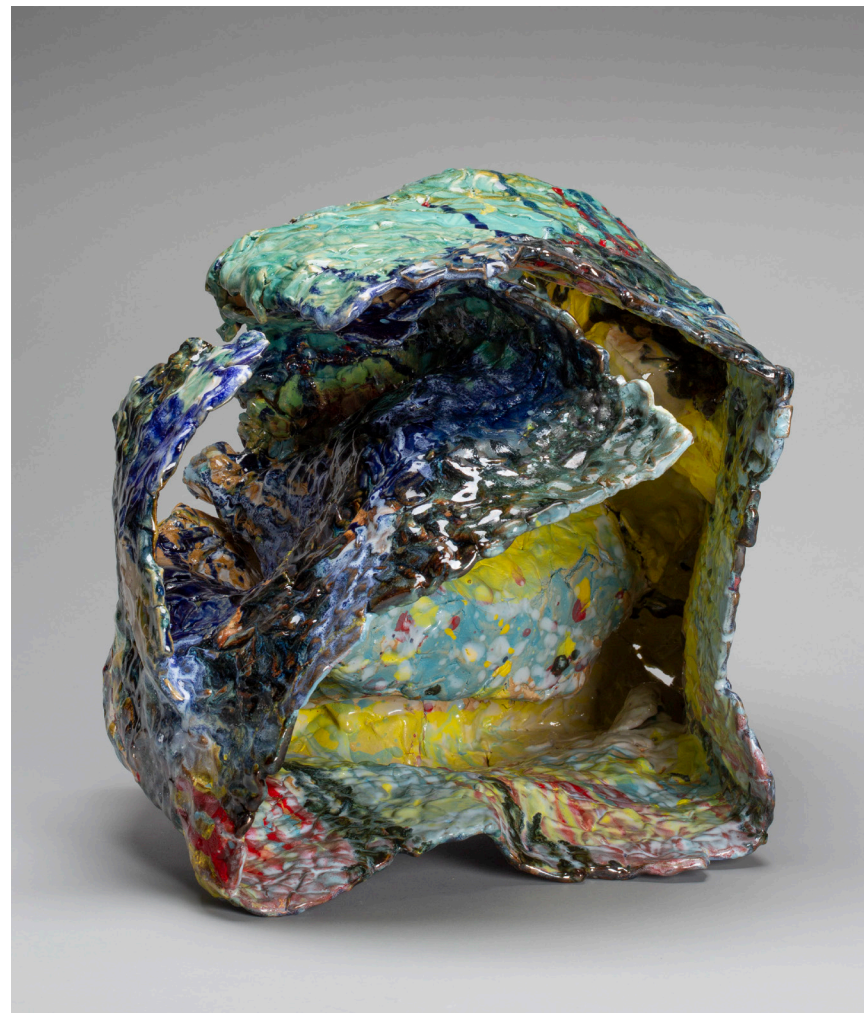


*Hanging Gardens III*  
Acrylic, ink, and collage on gessoed paper mounted on linen  
55 h x 105 w, inches  
2013





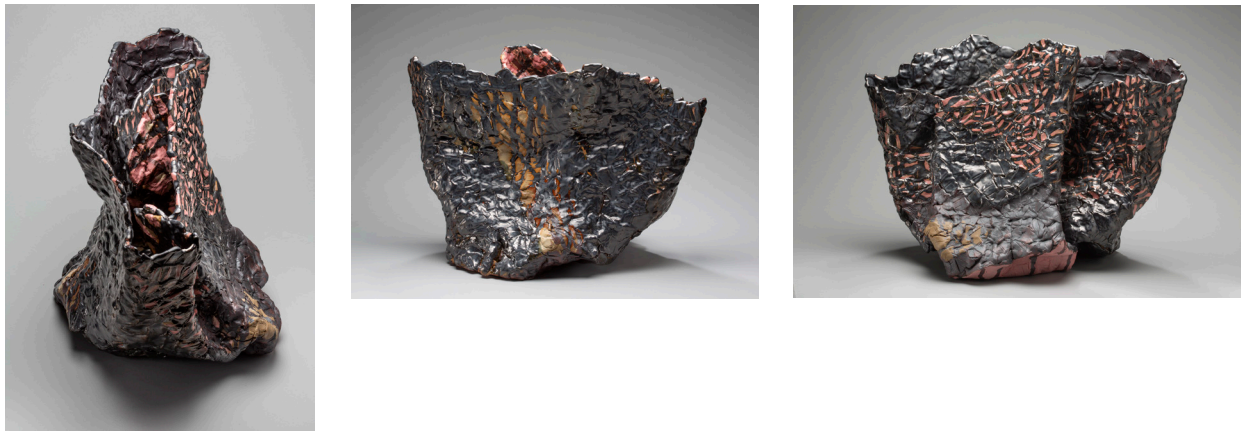








*When Gravity Becomes Material Series, Stand / Mint*  
 Terracotta and Porcelain  
 21-1/2 h x 17 w x 9 d, inches  
 2019



*When Gravity Becomes Material Series*  
 Terracotta and Porcelain  
 21-1/2 h x 17 w x 9 d, inches  
 2019



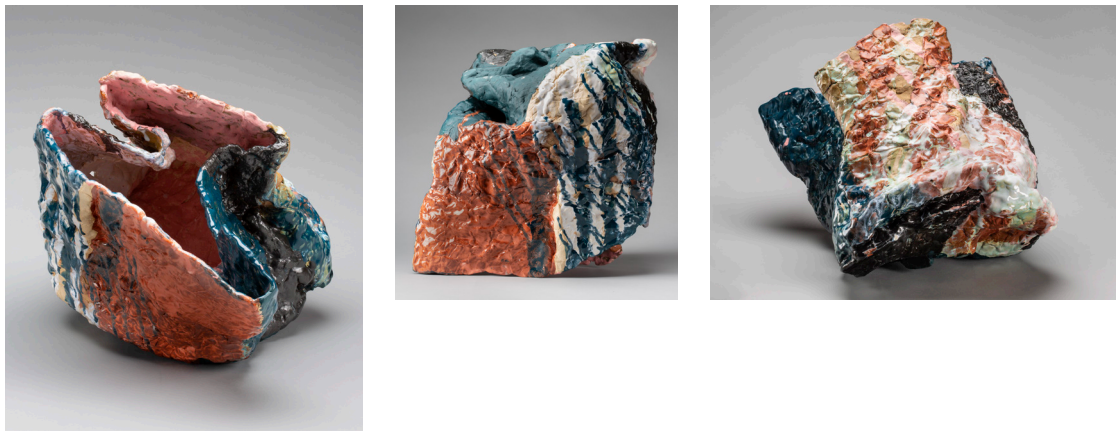
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 17 h x 15 w x 13 d, inches  
 2019



*When Gravity Becomes Material Series, Persia / Fold*  
 Terracotta and Porcelain  
 15 h x 17 w x 13 d, inches  
 2019



*When Gravity Becomes Material Series, Stand / Mint*  
 Terracotta & Porcelain  
 21-1/2 h x 17 w x 9 d, inches  
 2019

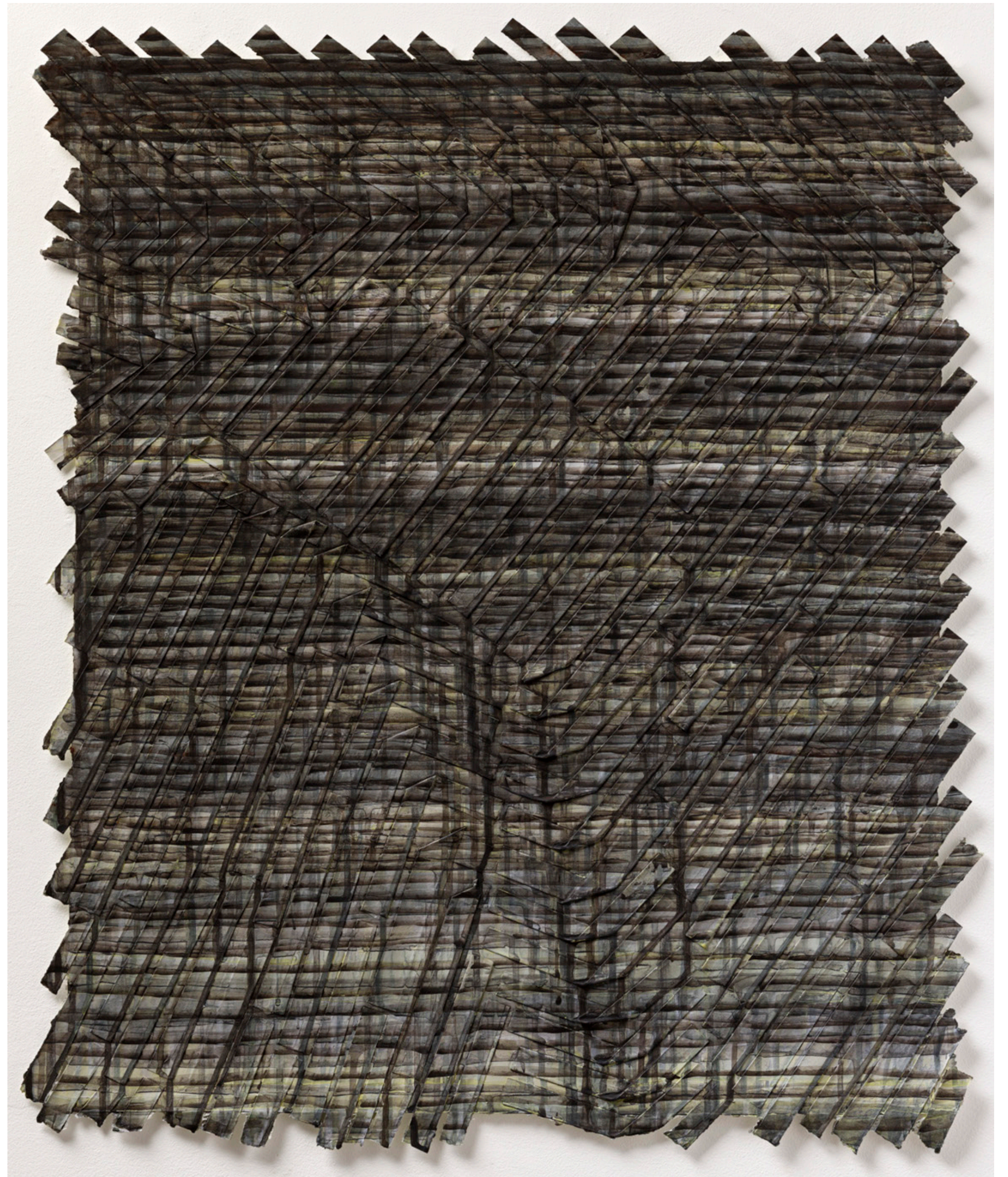


*When Gravity Becomes Material Series, Stand / Mint*  
 Terracotta & Porcelain  
 21-1/2 h x 17 w x 9 d, inches  
 2019





Addie Langford, 2018, Photograph by Jeff Cancelosi



Right:  
*Creosote/Yellow*  
 acrylic, ink and mixed media on gessoed paper mounted on linen  
 21 w x 25 h, inches  
 2014



# Drifts of Time

## New Painting by Addie Langford

by George Tysh

“To use a formula of Nietzsche’s, it is never at the beginning that something new, a new art, is able to reveal its essence; what it was from the outset it can reveal only after a detour in its evolution.”

Gilles Deleuze, *The Time-Image*

Thus does the French philosopher, in volume two of his

discourse on the workings of film form, lay the groundwork for an edifice that is really an endless opening out. Floor upon floor, chapter after chapter, he patiently examines how it is that an image both comes into (and relates to the immensity of) existence, and this before our gaze.

That this *becoming* also infects non-cinematic imagery is one surprise that the new paintings of Addie Langford have in store. The initial shock, a few short years ago, of her all-over works, their *trust-in-nothing*, was dramatic in its suggestiveness. To stand before them, to contemplate their chromatic darkness, was to find oneself held captive by an ephemeral *something* in the not-there. This quality was a powerful, wordless enigma which instantly transformed us into helpless inhabitants of an enclosure, a *huis clos* opening both inwardly and outwardly. And it made many viewers reach for the reassurance of such worn-out terms as “minimal” and “color-field.”

Yet, per Nietzsche, it has taken the present “detour in its evolution” for us to recognize the actuality of Langford’s art. What was once relentlessly static shows itself -- in the logic of its construction and the means of its application -- to be a form in movement, a surface generating a rigorous alignment that *drifts*, as if impelled by a force majeure.

So, flipping Deleuze’s terms, Langford constructs an endless opening which is also an edifice -- a space becoming a solid becoming a space -- whose vast, discomfoting philosophical

implications refuse to dissipate in the well-lit familiarity of a gallery. Others have peered into the abyss of unsettled form -- Mark Rothko, Robert Ryman, Anselm Kiefer -- but Langford responds to atmospheres and environments in and through very personal materials: accumulations of running acrylic and ink, layerings of recuperated paper and fragments of text, obsessive underpainting and overpainting taken to extremes. All of this in the service of a vision that refuses to let us look awry.

Detours -- in adventure or horror narratives, and famously in film noir -- are fraught with apprehension. But in Langford’s new work, they are the very trajectory of her insight. The slippage, the drift, becomes the inevitable pull of the image, the gravity of its journey from a here and now into an unknown, a gesture of purest (im)mortality.

Relentless washes of color in these recent paintings realize a potential that was always-already there, just not as expressionistically grid-like nor as exuberant, this last a perhaps unusual adjective for the existential awareness and insistent drama of Langford’s grounded yet unfettered time-images. They shift, breathe, and won’t let go.



*Black/Spoon/Tan*  
Acrylic, ink and mixed media on gessoed paper mounted on linen  
60.5 w x 72.5 h, inches  
2014





*Gray/Peach/Cream*  
Acrylic, ink and mixed media on gessoed paper mounted on linen  
32 w x 36 h, inches  
2014



*Creosote/Brown/Blue*  
acrylic, ink and mixed media on gessoed paper mounted on linen  
21 w x 25.5 h, inches  
2014



# Rumination in Seven Parts: of The Gray Series

by Biba Bell

## Of body

“Whoever looks for the key to a text ordinarily finds a body” writes philosopher Jacques Rancière, in his project tracing the poetic utterance to political subjectivity.<sup>1</sup> Bodies lie beneath letters, inside letters, and symbols hollow out be filled by sensory organs, memories, and specters. Evident to Rancière, text, and its practices of reading and writing, continuously performs and becomes body. A process of excavating flesh from a ruse-like strata of symbols, “the text is *already* of the body, the fabricated object is already of a language that beats meaning.”<sup>2</sup> Citing the language of religious ritual, the word is exceeded by the rhythms created through the convergence of documentation and performative score. Historiography turns to choreography, where the slumbering body of the past is doubled by its body-to be, awoken towards futurity. Recitation and reception, these events of encounter are acts that unearth bodies, so we can hold them with and as our own. Bowing heads, swiveling hips, arms swinging with soft sighs, we prod our materials to unearth these yet unseen, unheard bodies dormant inside, waiting to take a leap.

I travel to this somewhat obscure moment in Rancière upon my first encounter with Addie Langford’s *The Gray Series*, a group of complex, wholistic, and dense works—collaged, painted, woven. Large and intricate, each piece’s palate and texture produce a sense of history discerned through acts of making and dwelling. Stratified layers across surface and depth create an organic play of marks—lines, grids, and rhythmic repetition. Like ancient papyrus, their surfaces vibrate from behind, keeping within them a key that asks to be deciphered and mulled over. They have been labored over, compressed, and felt. The materiality of the work alludes a narrative of working: through, within, upon.

Each piece resonates a slightly different mood and tone through its visual rhythm. Woven patterns read as a commitment to a particular action, a way of moving, and through their repetitions the body is directed, oriented, and invested. With repetition the body begins to take shape. Enter the painting and we find a body, dancing against image, gesture, texture, materiality, architecture, surface. Reception in this sense could be thought as a bodying forth, experienced through the pulls and compressions within the environs proposed by a piece, conditions within which it remains. Differentiating between the work (of literature) and the text (following the pathways of discourse) Roland Barthes writes that where the text is held in language, “the work can be held in the hand.”<sup>3</sup>

## Of gravity

Many works in the series incorporate drips that belie a sense of gravity and weight, but not in a top-down sense. This gravity is felt through the rhythmic fall of one foot in front of the other, a cadence of projecting bodies forward. Langford’s gravity becomes material, where wash and color produce a tone of weighted-ness, pushing the eye past the surface to its underside, past the terrestrial to the subterranean. Color and wash seep into the density of paper and cloth, burying themselves inside. Drips remain as evidence. This is a body, her body. *Gray: Ophelia* (2011), a slow sinking. She hovers into the depths. Of dreams, desire, the subconscious, a poetic embrace within the space of loss.

Each piece in Langford’s *Gray Series* presents a version of stratification, like a window allowing a glimpse into a varied and deliberate process of material accumulation and compression. Haptic, the eye that touches, as Merleau-Ponty would say, this encounter is felt through the breast, the belly, the gut. Vibratory, horizontal stratifications produce rhythmic variations, a sonic score. Like heart beats of the earth, a seismic etude. Hung on the wall, a painted collage might infer Kiefer-like remnants of a scene, as with *Gray: Black/Pink* (2013), but viewing quickly turns into an act of dwelling within the work, displacing a sense of top-down gravity. The piece swells, it disperses its rhythm back into the room, sonically off-gassing... off-sounding.

As strata, the work moves in two primary directions: across the horizon and dripping down. Although some, such as *Gray: Cream/Gray* (2013), incorporate a third, puckering, crumpling outward to conjure images of the pleated tactile resilience of kumo shibori dying techniques. The image takes a turn towards materiality, felt more than seen, and so increases the urge to take a bite. Like a chocolate layered cake, texture and gait ignites my compulsion, caloric and metabolic, to take a bite. Not just to nosh across chocolatey sweetness, but to get inside its depth, to work one’s way through and be spit out on the other side. The chocolate cake image gives way to a burrowing frenzy, of kneading of garden soil and griming fingernail sediment. Pungent scent of earth, deep dirt.

These two means of intake, two versions of bodily desires, sustains a tension in the work. One is for walking; one for digesting.

## Of cavity

The room engulfs me. What room? In this case Addie Langford’s studio. A large white rectangle whose ceilings vault with a height comparable to its width and depth. Part cube, part living room, this is an architecture whose corners and underside teem with pockets of inertia and memory. Within this space, daily acts of doing make themselves visible.

It is fitting that Langford’s most recent series of paintings incorporate rough, sometimes campy, upholstery fabric as canvas backdrops. An architecture of domesticity emerges through abstract geometries of cross-hatched lines and diagonals. Thick painterly strokes, dripping down from the wall plane, become structural supports for textile and its feminized practice of weaving, not dissimilar to other domestic forms of aesthetic labor such as quilting, sewing, folding, cooking. Here she mixes materials and binds them together—a labor of adhesion, arms wrapped around shoulders, ontological glue that holds, nurtures, absorbs.

Her domestic intervention turns collage towards the familiar surface of the kitchen counter, littered with to-do lists, marks and detritus of mundane measure. *The things one is supposed to do versus the things one wants to do*. Each piece’s surface is brined, washed, dripped upon, and cured. Like skin, *Gray: Black/Spoon/Tan* (2014) bravely asserts a protective fortress, a shimmering shell, an impenetrable threshold. The artist is deviant, the path a deviation ripe with nostalgia. We turn to look back, and this looking casts yet another weave, curving towards departure. Here, the work doubles as a cartographic map turned filing system, a receptacle of time and habit and sublimations. Dark, heavy, dripping, perhaps a wound. Fleshly pink hovers—these are also ancestral bodies.



### Of gesture

Roland Barthes discusses the artist's gesture in the work of Cy Twombly. Through the convergence of pulsation and expenditure, gesture depicts a line of action made by the articulating body. The painting persists as a record of progressive actions and idiosyncratic variations. The artist's body echoes as mark refers to touch refers to gesture. Presence through trace. Gesture connects us to the social as a lexicon of physicalized language, but also to the unintelligible, the unsaid, the un-thought or even fully formed. Feeling enters the room, or perhaps the room itself is structured by feeling, for, as Sara Ahmed notes, "bodies do not dwell in spaces that are exterior but rather are shaped by their dwellings and take shape by dwelling."<sup>4</sup> From this point of entry, we might bypass the eye to the touch, the hand to the heart, the head to the belly. Here, we live in a room populated by intangible particles—memories, dreams, fears, the unconscious.

Seated in the studio, *Gray: Paynes/Creosote* (2013) props against the wall second to my right. Scores of collaged strips of woven paper. Their edges depict yet another layer of strata, between the wall and the page and the painting, pressing repeatedly until space is silenced and taken up by the consistency of deep browns and hues of earth. Their arrangement is geometric, ordered, and architectural though undulating, reminding me of a rammed earth temple. But, rather than depicting the act of construction, the piece settles and turned toward the precipice of erosion. Paradoxically the walls of the house morph and lumber through a labored process of drawing the earth up, pulling clay out of its slumber, and demarcating an in-between space we can inhabit. A scent lingers. It is cool and slightly moist.

### Of furniture

Mounted on linens, I'm reminded of my comforts. Textiles offer a worn upholstery, nodding to an imaginary neutral, domestic background. The décor of this dwelling gives the witnessing body a chair to sit upon, a couch for rest, a counter to lean against, a window to take in the view. Domestic textures, reminiscent of Eric Satie's *furniture music*, tried and failed, but proves we cannot make music unnoticed as furniture, or at least *he* couldn't. if the body is always found in the work, this body is not asking to go unnoticed, ignored, or feign muteness. Resting into the labor of viewing emits its own creaks and squeaks. As Martha Graham famously proclaimed, "The body never lies."

Perhaps not a home, but a closet, where we keep hidden our deepest pains, traumas, mysteries, dreams and hopes. Compressing arms, legs, fascia, organs, heart center, and intellectual muscle in order to fit into the tightness of a space is not a mode of doing but of surviving. From the sanctuary of the closet creative acts offer an exercise in exposing our fragmented narratives to the world. From private to public; closet to pavilion. With each utterance the body is momentarily relieved of its Atlas-esque carriage. Firm fingers knead out burdened trapezius muscles running across shoulder gait. Shrug and shudder.

### Of time

*The Gray Series* creates a sense of embodied time available for collaboration. Thought, feeling, and action project from Langford's methodical, intricate, richly mesmerizing burial techniques. Time acts as a web for a series of relations, a rhizomatic structure whose traces can be seen in the holistic, though holey, zones depicted across *Gray: Drift/Gt Blue/Gray* (2014). Disparate identities are brought together and mended within this temporal crosshatch. A dimensional system is invested in through the logic of pigment, paper, fluids, and gesture.

### Of coupling

Feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray reminds us that nature is not one, but two. The patriarchal centrism of discourse privileges the male subject, made evident even in the simple, romantic phrase "I love you." Plucking into its tight linguistic weave and pooling a space for the (female) body, Irigaray inserts a necessary preposition: *I love to you*. The pre (before) position (place) incorporates a very different mode of address to the beloved other. Rather than subsumed into one, two produce a rhythm of in-betweenness that bleeds in harmony rather than a single note. At stake in this de-possessive coupling is a shift in the logic of binaries to one of intimacies, involving both closeness and autonomy. This alongside-ness in *Gray: White/Blue/Orange* (2013) incorporates the compositional tactics of the diptych, often present in Langford's oeuvre.

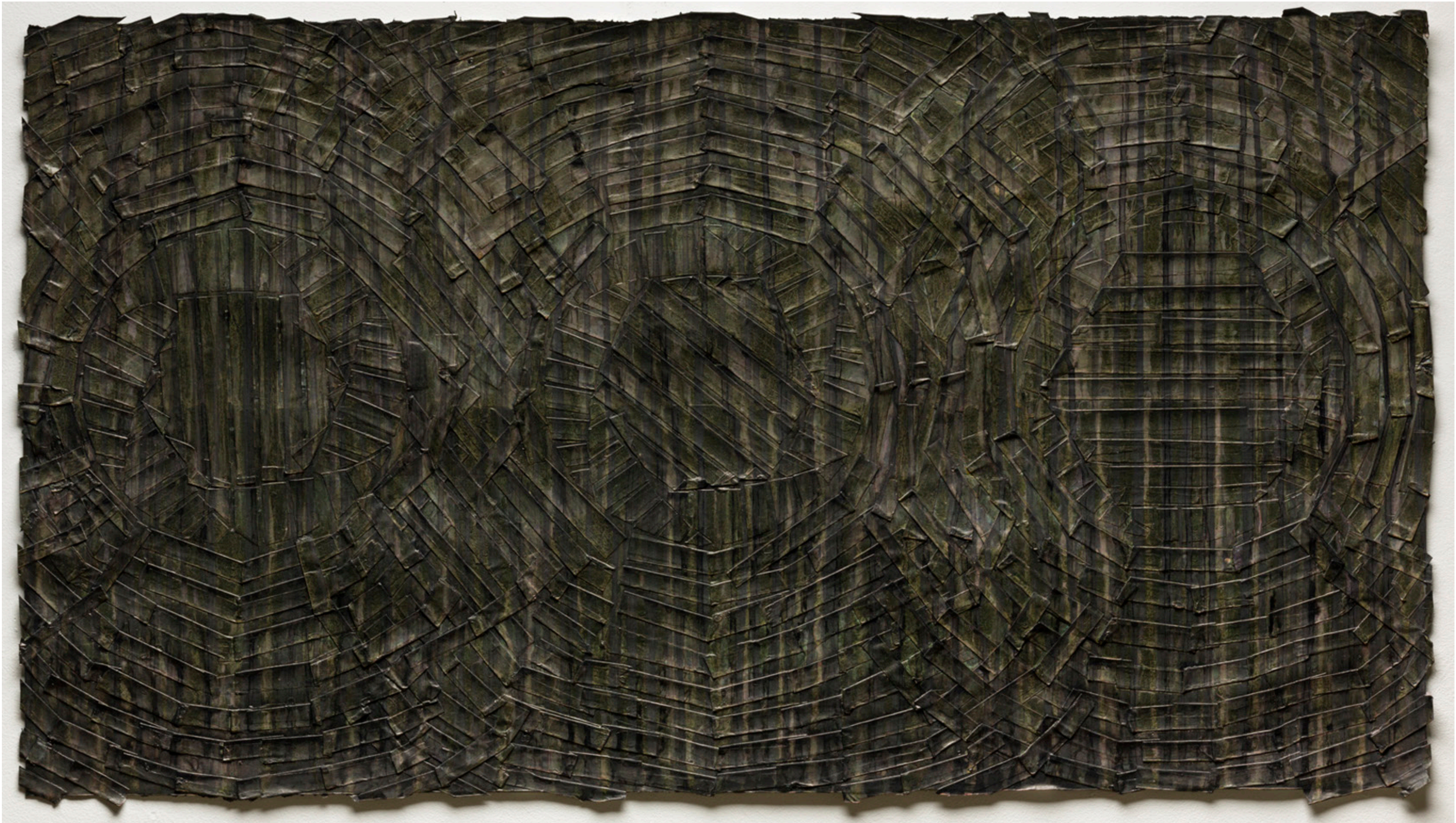
For Gilles Deleuze, the diptych transitions the painting from one of vibration to one of resonance. Two bodies, side by side, hearts a-buh... a-buh... a-beating. How do we account for a spectrum of pre-positions? How can we, in relation, maintain the spacing of the à in our *tête-à-tête*, *coeur-à-coeur*, *corpse-à-corpse* (which includes the play of tops and bottoms)? Throughout Langford's oeuvre the diptych expresses subtle and profound beauty resonant across routes of relation, having and holding difference.

Almost imperceptible are the everyday, quiet shifts in gait, scent, rhythm between you and I. Micromovements, a slight shift in posture. With nothing to hide, we have nothing to lose. To become imperceptible, write Deleuze and Felix Guattari, is "to have dismantled love in order to become capable of loving... To paint oneself gray on gray."<sup>5</sup>

### Endnotes

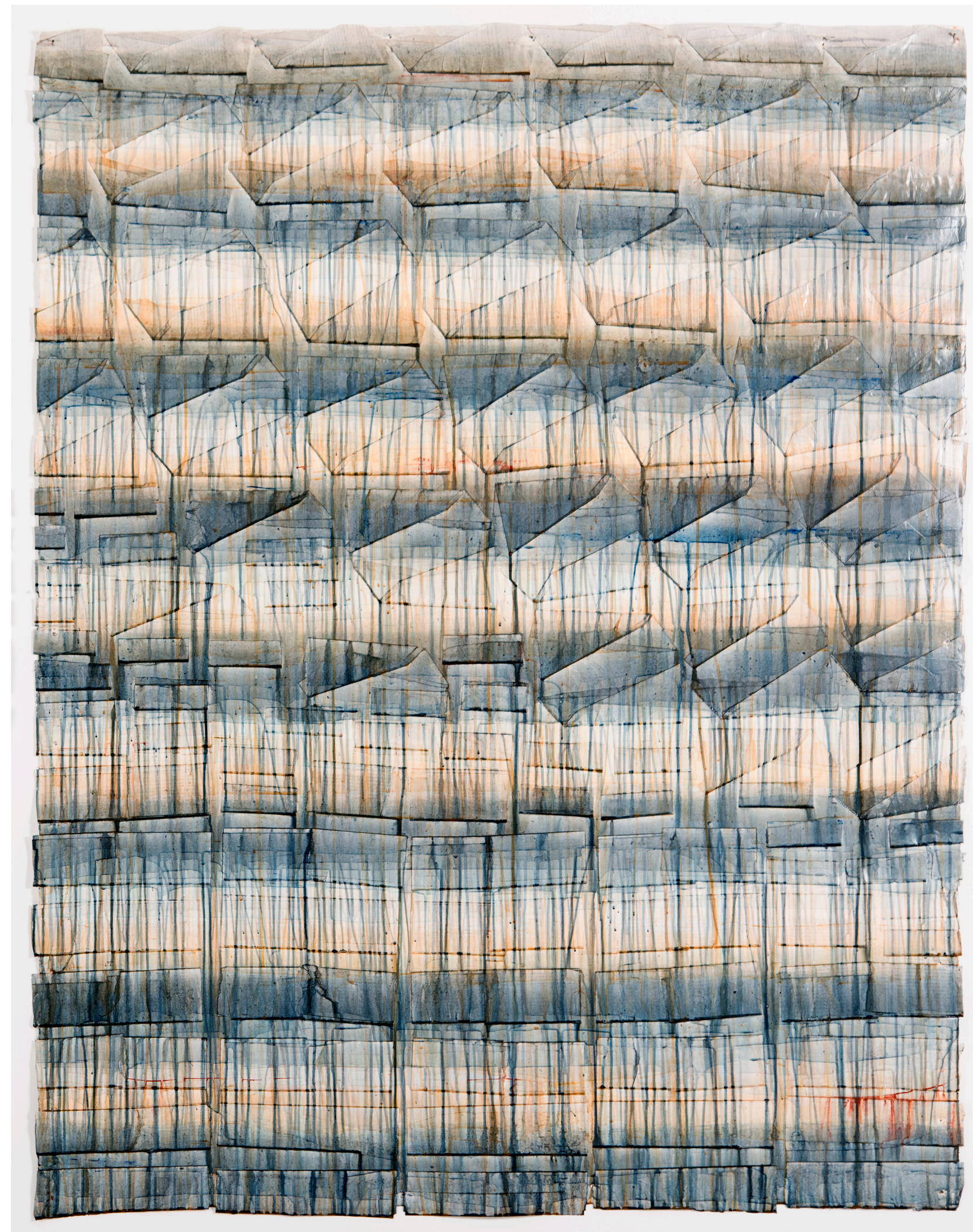
1. Jacques Rancière, *The Flesh of Words: The Politics of Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 42.
2. Ibid., 81.
3. Roland Barthes, *Image – Music – Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 157.
4. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 9.
5. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 197.





*Creosote/Three*  
acrylic, ink and mixed media on gessoed paper mounted on linen  
36 w x 22 h, inches  
2014





*Gray White Blue Orange*  
Acrylic ink collage and mixed media on gessoed paper mounted on linen  
72 h x 114 w, inches



## ADDIE LANGFORD

In a practice that includes ceramics, drawing, sculpture, and painting, Addie Langford's artistic methodology has origins in slow craft, which can be described as the patient undertaking of process and the mindful inquiry into the source of materials. She is an inquisitor interested in communicating with the material and extracting the poetic potential at its limits. For instance, a recent series of paintings originate from an everyday, tactile experience of Detroit car culture—the interior of the automobile. She stretched on canvas the manufactured material used inside of cars meant to withstand the punctures, weight, and pressure of the human body. Its industrial name is “composite hide” because it uses the leftover scraps of mass production from the leather industry—a combination of many animals. Composite hide is made of three layers: a top layer of synthetic rubber, a middle of cloth mesh, and bottom layer of actual leather detritus. At first, she painted on the top synthetic layer that paradoxically is cast to emulate the texture of real leather—it is what hands feel on a steering wheel. When paint is applied to the surface, it races down and dries suspended like water spots on a window.

For *Landlord Colors*, Langford initiated the *Verso Phthalo Series*, which used the underside of the composite hide—typically unseen—made of actual animal skin. This surface is prone to absorption, and mark-making instantly becomes permanent. As a complementary process, Langford walks across the surface with a thick brush and lets the natural weight of her arm sag—a body giving reverence to bodies. Langford is influenced by the Korean *dansaekhwa* painters who used found material canvases, such as Ha Chong-Hyun's use of agricultural hemp. To think about these material legacies in parallel, the surfaces directly relate to their respective economies, while their method of paint application is strategic and emotive.

L.M.

Addie Langford. Facsimile from *Landlord Colors*, Cranbrook Museum, 2019.





# A Spring Offensive

by Dennis Nawrocki  
April 17, 2018

Be sure, on your next visit to the Scarab Club, to ascend the staircase to the lounge and “history” rooms above the first floor exhibition space. Upon arrival, make your way past the newly installed wood and yarn screens that momentarily obscure and mystify the familiar doorway into the capacious members lounge. There, awaiting your arrival, you’ll discover “Objects and Place,” a smart, telling transformation, by a collaborative trio of artists, of the dusky, fireplace dominated space. Marie Herwald Hermann, Laith Karmo, and curator Addie Langford, have reconfigured and refreshed the familiar, cluttered space. Fusty vintage furniture (sofas, tables, and chairs) has been shifted to the margins of the room, drawing attention to the two patterned carpets that sprawl across the floor. Nor are any paintings visible on the dark, wood-paneled walls.

After a brief scan, a few, widely spaced objects stand out: beefy white ashtrays dot sturdy oak tables (Karmo), disembodied vacuums pop up underfoot here and there (Langford), and hundreds of tiny multicolored pins, like an insouciant riff on mille-fleurs, adorn two walls (Hermann). Karmo’s stolid ashtrays, titled *Meditating on Misogyny*, elicit images of a brace of cigar-smoking men of an afternoon or evening opining on art, pulchritude, and the state of the world in an odiferous, nicotine-stained, smoke-filled man cave. Quills of aromatic incense stud the ashtrays, at the ready to exorcise the stale, tobacco-heavy ozone in favor of fresh air—and, presumably, fresh, alternate topics of discourse. One might also note that Karmo, no fan of prescribed, columnar pedestals, has found especially apt and congenial perches for his chunky stoneware receptacles on the Club’s vintage tables.

For her part, Langford’s wrecked, dismembered vacuums, shorn of handles and refuse bags, focus on the flat, distorted contours of the housing for motor, wheels, and brushes of a standard upright vacuum. Adding overlapping strips of tape in their wake, she suggests the back and forth, overlapping movements of her

Sweeps compulsively scarfing up the accumulated dust and dirt—until they crash. While bearing a resemblance to roombas (said another viewer), Langford’s porcelain wrecks seem much more akin to powerful electric machines at the end of a fruitless, abandoned mission to tidy and neaten up the parameters of art and life. Perhaps too, at this point, a visitor, like this writer, belatedly realizes that the pale, lumpy object laid out on a bench on the landing of the Club’s staircase is in fact a porcelain rendering of a hollow vacuum cleaner bag.

Hermann’s contribution to the “less is more” facelift of this dowdy room, except for her psyche altering screens at the entrance, might be overlooked at first. Absent the bevy of members’ paintings usually enlivening the walls, Hermann and Langford have inserted an array of colorful pins into the holes made by nails that secured thousands of pictures gracing the walls of the lounge since the completion of the club’s building in 1928. Now two multihued waves fifteen feet wide drift and flow freely and joyfully across the gravy-toned walls. Like a wide screen view of masses of swallows wheeling across the sky they evoke something of the tenor, breadth, and sheer number of artists and artifacts embraced by the Club over its long and memorable history.

Admittedly, this décor altering re-do by team Hermann, Karmo, & Langford tweaks and pokes at the vintage ambience of the grand old Scarab Club housed in its venerable Arts & Crafts building, and its storied practices and programs. More significantly, what “Objects and Place”—and its renovating trio of makers—also sensitively and knowingly acknowledge, in concert with the interventions of generations of exhibitors, is the Club’s long-lived, broadly supportive aesthetic legacy. This eye-opening, conceptually savvy installation, albeit short-lived, now becomes part of its institutional history: perhaps in years to come as the spicy, spirited spring cleaning of 2018?

# Objects & Place

Scarab Club Exhibition, April 2018







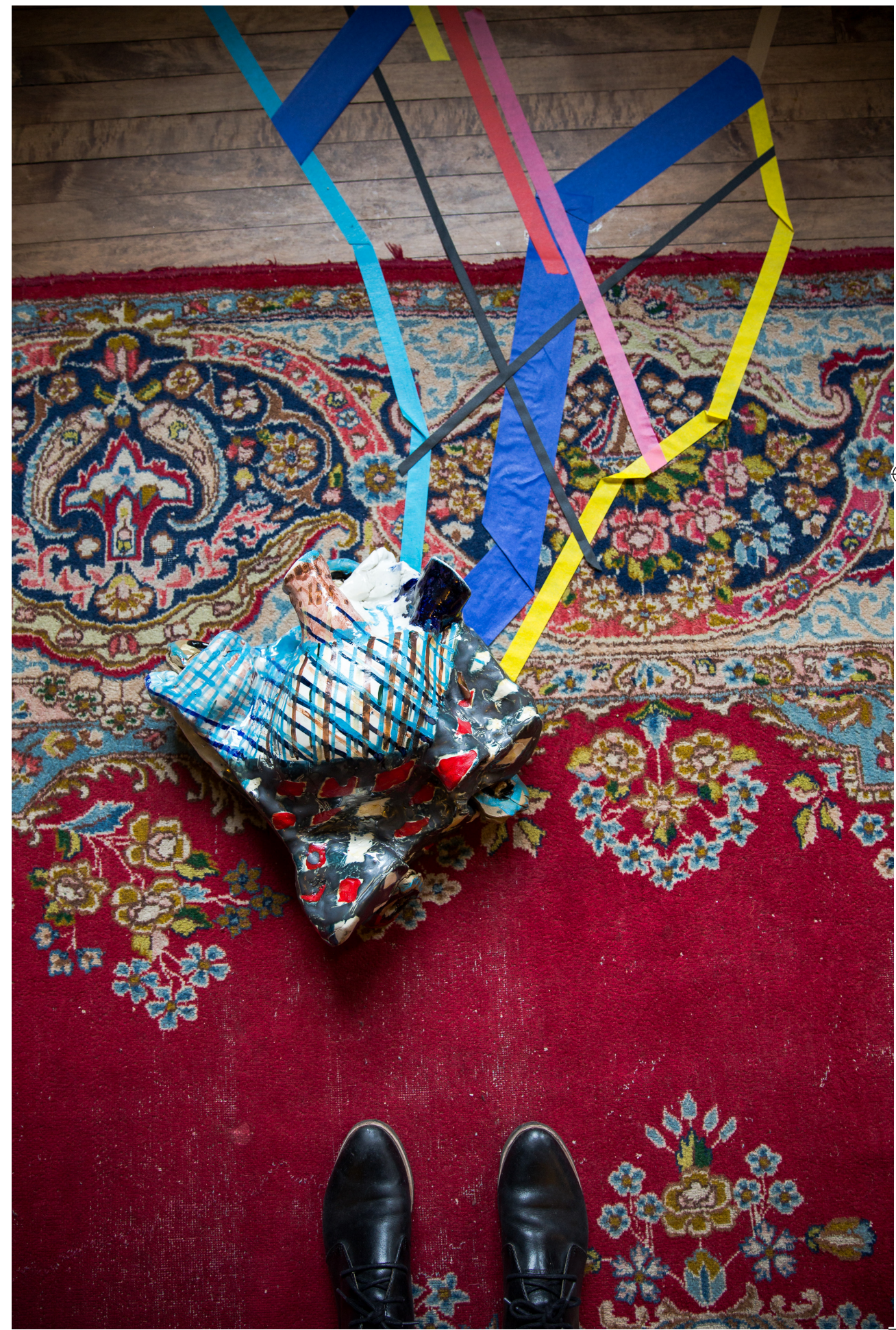










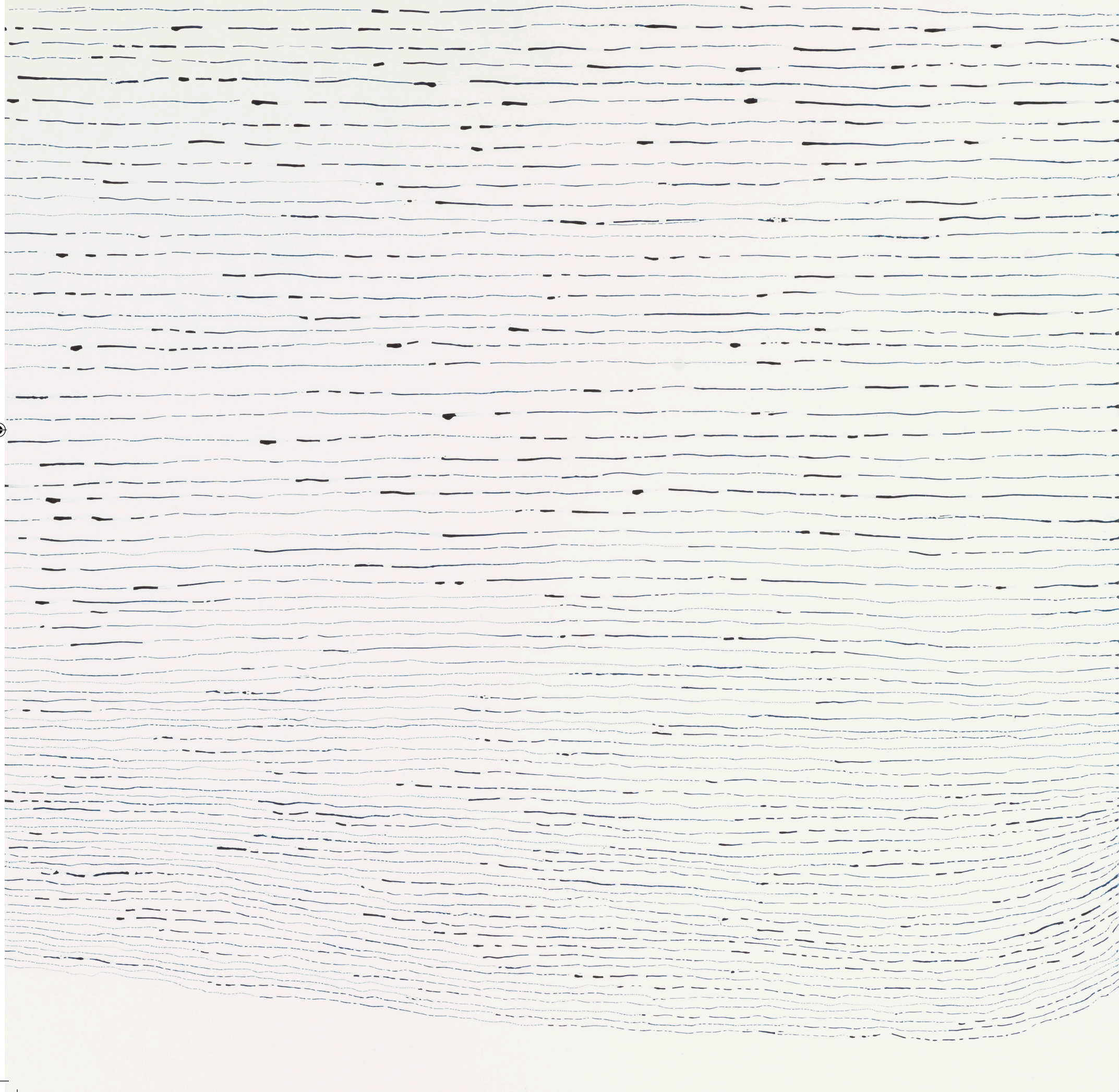




# A Timeless Elsewhere

Simone Desousa Gallery, 2016

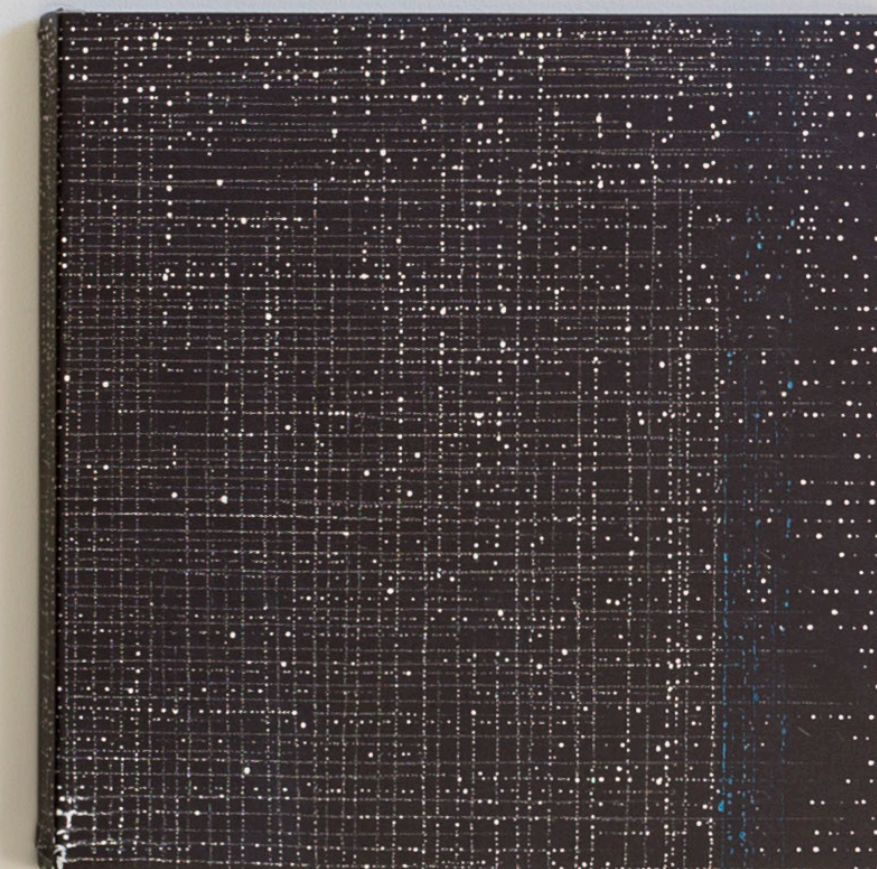
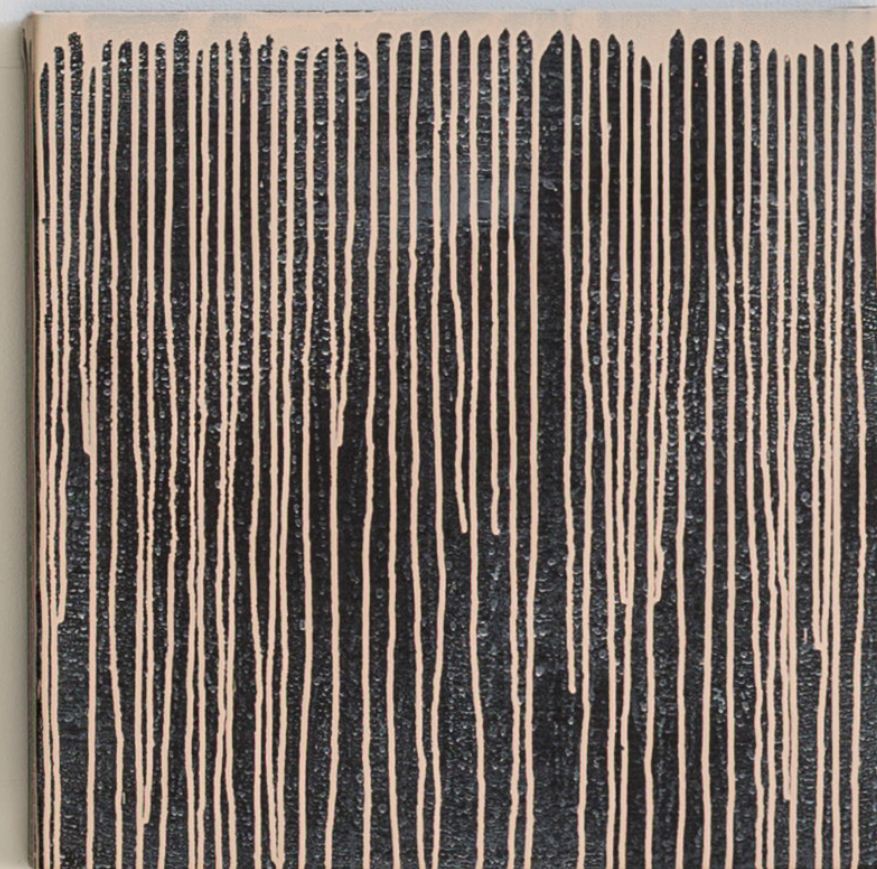
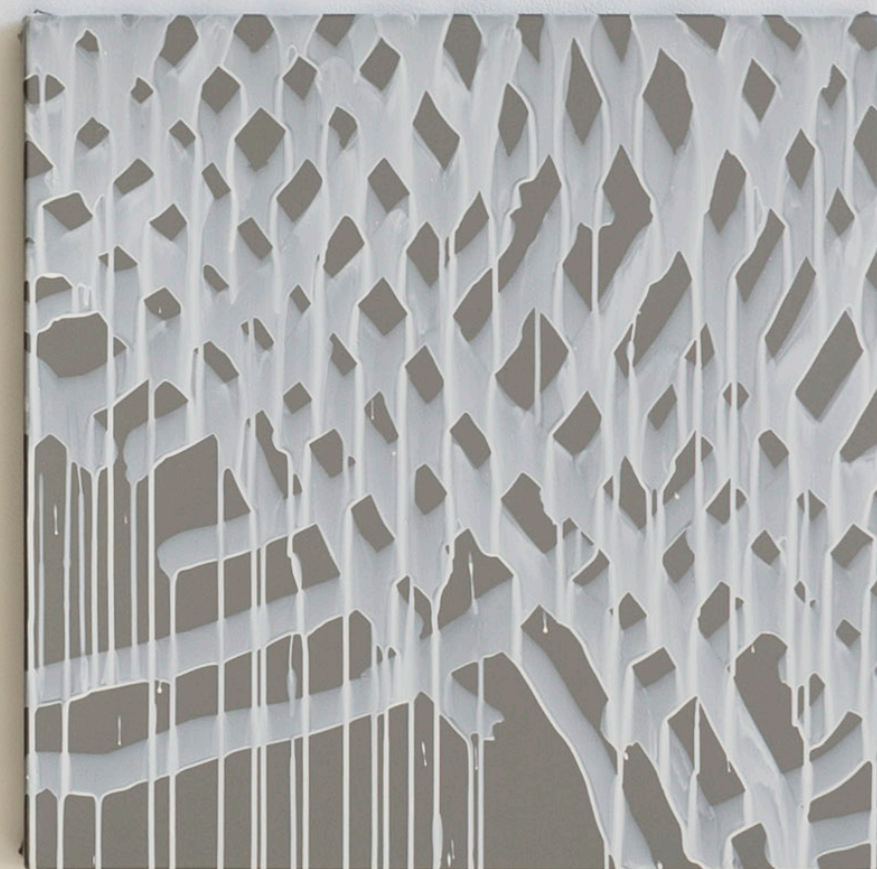
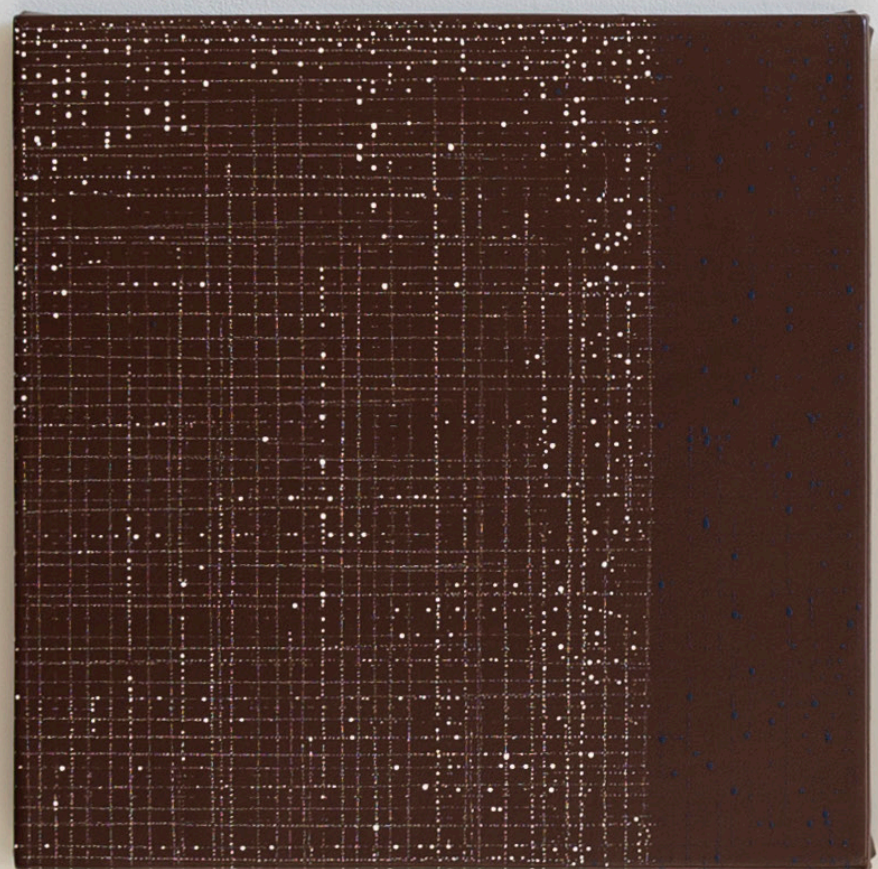
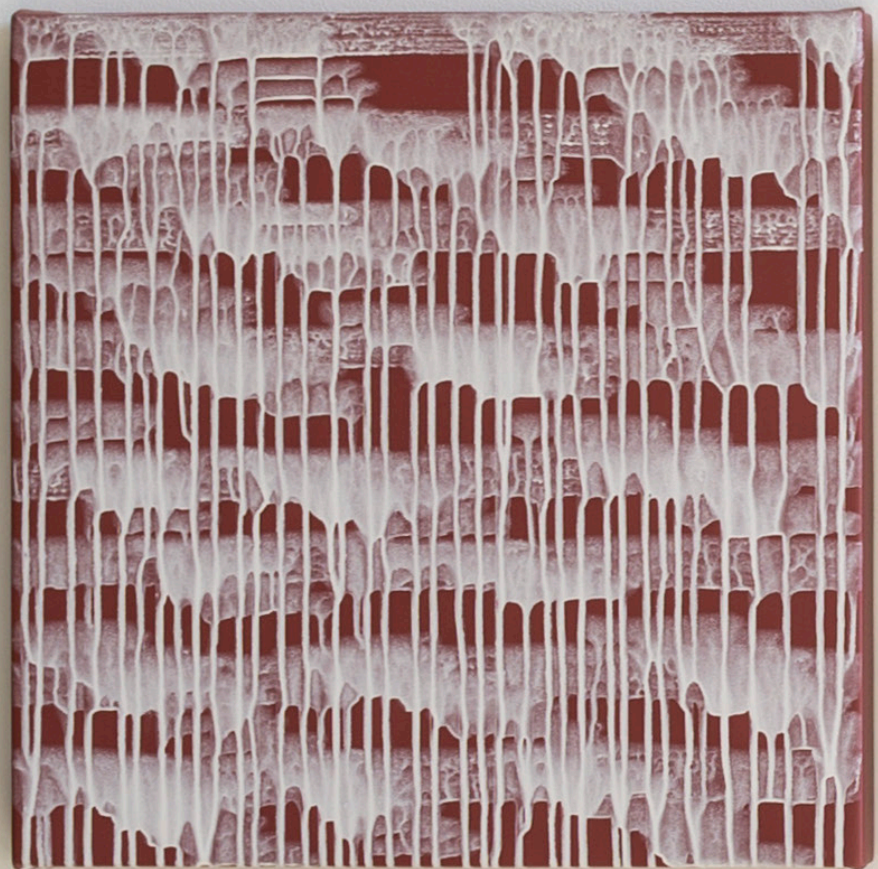
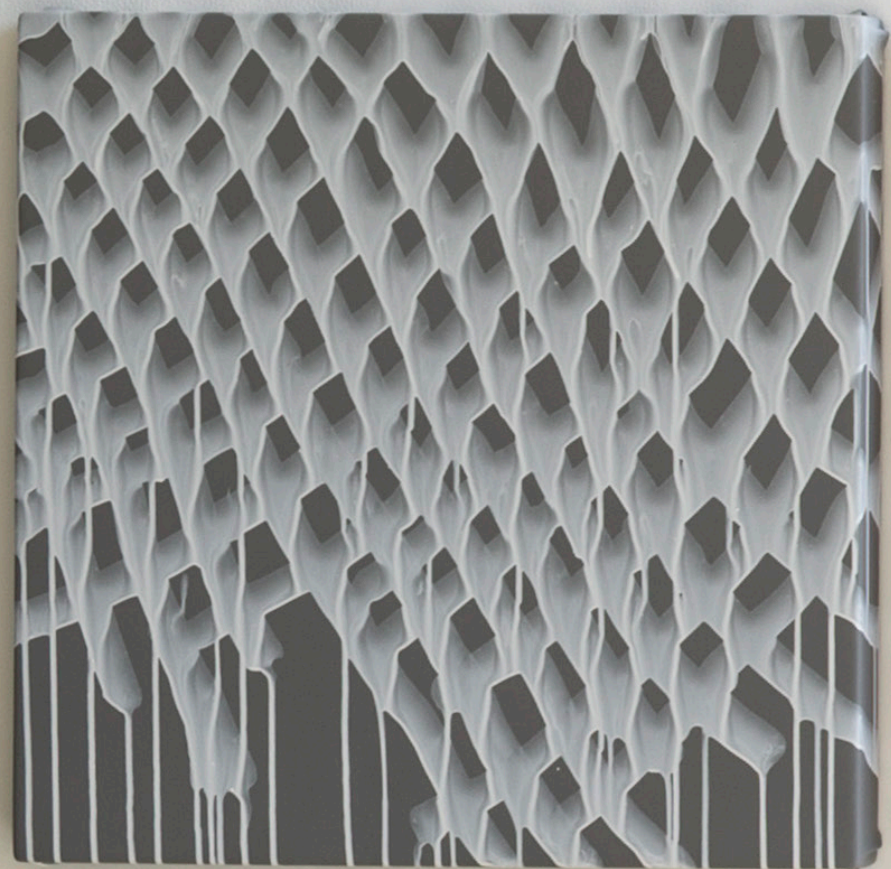
Photography by Tim Thayer















Siftwork Burgundy Pink  
Acrylic on composite hide mounted on panel  
40 h x 36.5 w, inches  
2016



Siftwork Burgundy Black  
Acrylic on composite hide mounted on panel  
40 h x 36.5 w, inches  
2016



Siftwork Burgundy White  
Acrylic on composite hide mounted on panel  
40 h x 36.5 w, inches  
2016







Page 49: Meshwork Brown Cell White  
Acrylic on vinyl mounted on panel  
36.5 h x 40 w, inches  
2016

Page 50: Meshwork Brown Cell Blue  
Acrylic on vinyl mounted on panel  
36.5 h x 40 w, inches  
2016





# Art of Resistance

by Matthew Piper

*“It is not the pots we are forming, but ourselves.”*

MC Richards

*“I [see] no dichotomy between art and science, as both [are] based on precise observation of inner and outer worlds.”*

Samuel R. Delany

Addie Langford is no idealist. Her experimental, materials-obsessed process is rooted in tension and discomfort. Her paintings and sculptures evoke an affect of entropy, of the dissolution and degradation of ideal forms over time/under duress. It’s not that she can’t make objects that you could describe as “perfect.” (She did that before, when she worked on a porcelain production line, and she describes it as a kind of suffering.) It’s that she finds her truth (her beauty) in the struggle.

Her work begins with an intimate, intricate understanding of material. When she speaks of porcelain, for instance, she’s all the way down, in its molecular structure. When she pulls back and describes its characteristic tendencies using the language of preference (“Porcelain doesn’t like to be large-scale.”), she sounds like Louis Kahn (“You say to brick, ‘What do you want, brick?’ And brick says to you, ‘I like an arch.’”). This is not a coincidence; Langford’s undergraduate studies in architecture are the deep-set foundation upon which her sculptural practice is built. (Twenty years later, she’s still talking about tuck pointing and mortaring, joinery and the post and lintel.) But Kahn, remember, was an idealist. He listened to brick, and made an arch; Langford understands that porcelain doesn’t want to be large-scale, but is making it relatively large-scale anyway, fashioning in her most recent body of work big, “stressed,” slumping, sack-like vessels that embody (and thereby reveal) their misuse.

This revelatory, adversarial way of working with porcelain arose in the “Soft Compression” series of 2010, smaller works whose construction involved a lively, active process of “mismanagement,” of “building too wet and too fast.” Here Langford first made the decision not to obscure the visual remnants (seams, joints) of her corrective processes—to let the objects, in other words, speak of their struggles.

In painting, too, she notably enacts resistances. She works exclusively in acrylic, a medium that she avows to once hating for its “soulless,” artificial quality, but that, over time, she has developed a comfortable working relationship with. Concomitant with her latest sculptural works, she is executing a body of paintings in acrylic on tapestry fabric, a material that doesn’t really want to be painted on. (“Hyper-synthetic,” it hungrily sucks up the paint in uncomfortable and ghostly ways.) One can glance back to “A Timeless Elsewhere,” a 2016 series of paintings executed on vinyl and composite hide (a material, Langford notes, that we “know from Pizza Hut booths and car interiors”), to see an opposed but related exploration. There, the paint was “rejected” by the material, so that it “fell off” the support, allowing the artist to create thin, precise, dripping lines whose presence on the hide seems tenuous, conditional.

Lines (created by both brush stroke and drip) are a key component of Langford’s painterly vocabulary. Works in the “Timeless Elsewhere” series are marked by grid-like, cellular structures of varying densities and orientations that seem to warp, drift, become overwhelmed. (Here Langford cites barn architecture, and the curving, fence-like forms of influential Cranbrook sculptor Michael Hall.) One thinks of a remnant of structure, of the lived-in grid, of an ideal system or scheme that is observably collapsing, decaying, eroding.



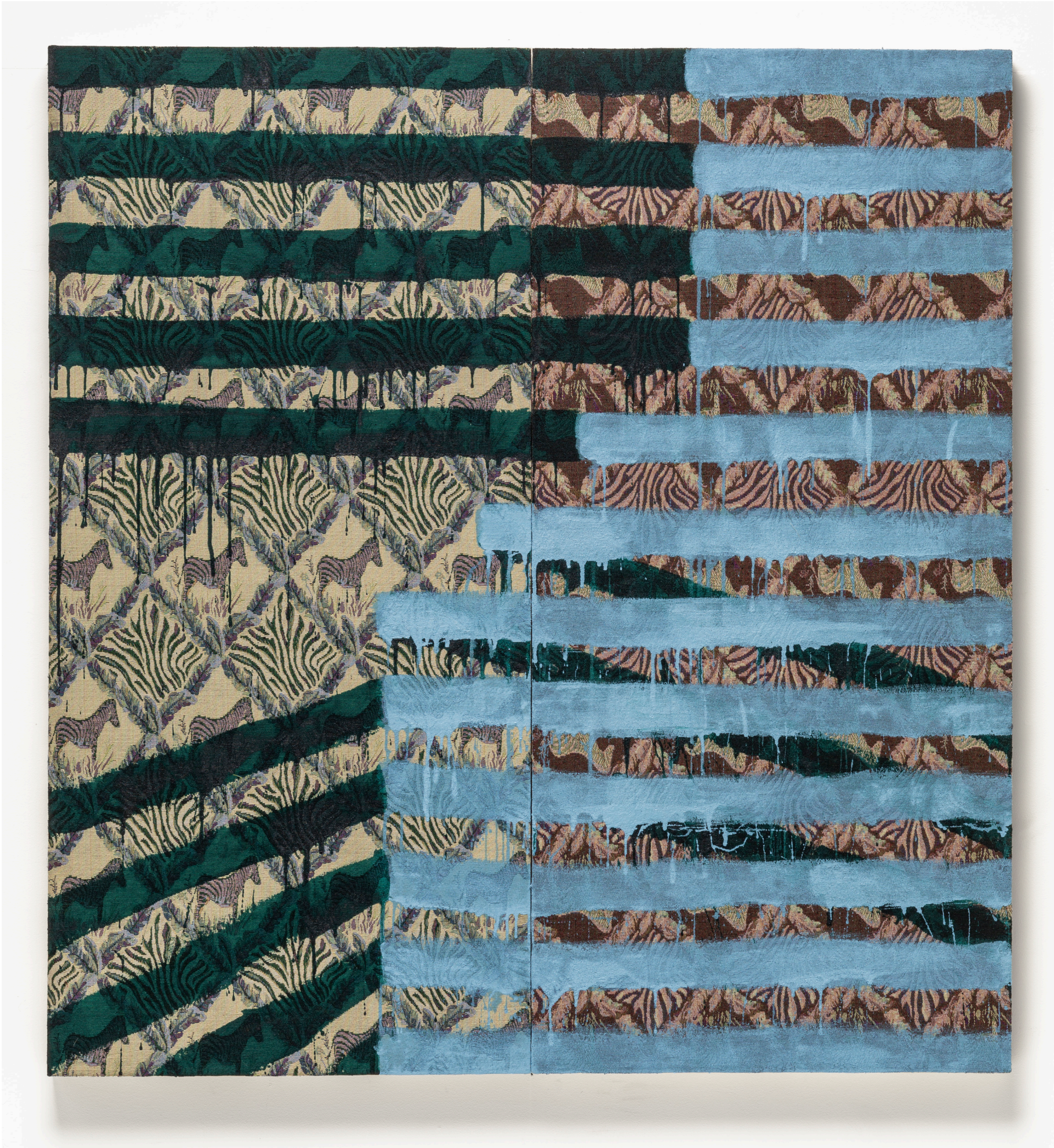
“Paper, clay, and now fabric,” Langford says, “function for me as a stand-in for the body.” Looked at this way, her work suggests the multitudinous forces against which we humans labor, bodily: stress, gravity, aging, illness, anxiety, obsolescence, loss of control (cf. potter and poet MC Richards: “to know ourselves by our resistances”). Therein lies the subterranean empathy and pathos of this abstract artist’s work: given the right frame, we might see these objects as ourselves, bearing tell-tale signs of our perpetual physical and psychic trials.

Her most recent works suggest something broader. In painting, Langford is guided first and foremost by her support surface, whether it be the synthetic hides of “A Timeless Elsewhere” or the paper that she stiffened and reinforced with repeated washes to make “The Gray Series.” It is from the idiosyncrasies of the surface, intimately understood, that the content of her work emerges. In her new paintings, which are physically larger than those that came before, the tapestry fabrics that she finds herself drawn to are curiously loaded with preexisting imagery: kitschy scenes of kittens and zebras, flower pots and watering cans. Langford herself downplays the significance of the imagery (which she at once obscures, highlights, responds to, and complicates with her bold, dripping brushstrokes); she is more interested in the fact that the pictures appear both on the front and (in reverse image, with different values) on the back of the fabric—thus proposing to her an appealing basis for working in the diptych form.

But the character of the imagery is not as easy for the viewer to dismiss. Its evocation of cliché textures of domestic American life interacts in startling ways with the artist’s unusually wide, horizontal brushwork, which is here redolent of the stripes of Old Glory. Perhaps the beset body of concern here is the body politic. If so, the haunting doubling of the already awkward imagery and the bleeding, curving brush strokes cohere into a national portrait of slow-motion ruination, a process that, the works suggest, begins in the home, with the family, and in the aging structures (historic, socio-political) that define the nation, and works outward, toward the civic sphere and the present moment of perpetual crisis.

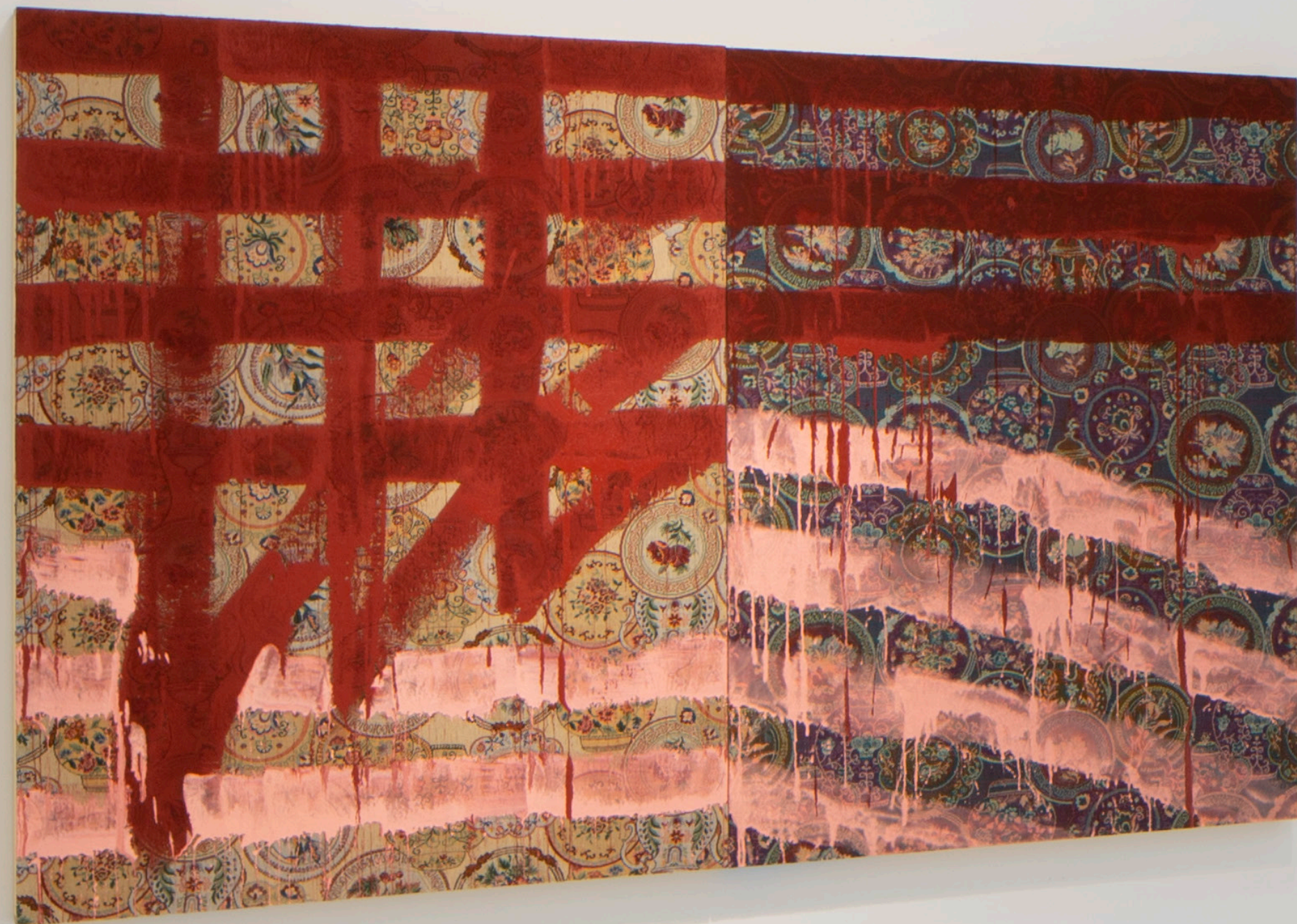
If this shift toward the social seems surprising, consider that only recently, Langford created a body of sculptures with the “Me Too” movement in mind. The general shape of these compact, vividly colored, floor-bound objects was inspired by mid-century vacuum cleaner heads, and as installed at Detroit’s Scarab Club, they were intended, in part, to help start a conversation about that institution’s historic marginalization of women and people of color.

But if Langford is not an idealist, neither is she a polemicist, and it is a strength of her work that it will at once absorb and deflect any number of complementary or contradictory readings, as her surfaces do to the paint she applies to them. (Flags? Sure, maybe. But maybe not.) What persists is her approach: art making as resistance training, as clear-eyed experimentation and incremental learning process, as embracing that which makes her uncomfortable and living with it, working with it until it makes intuitive sense—until, as she puts it, “we can get somewhere together.” In this, the artist maps (wisely, subtly) a useful path for both the individual body and the collective.



*When Gravity Becomes Material: Phthalo / Cornflower/ Cebra*  
Acrylic and Domestic Fabric on Board  
55 h x 52 w x 2 1/4 d, inches  
2018





# When Gravity Becomes Material

Hill Gallery, 2018







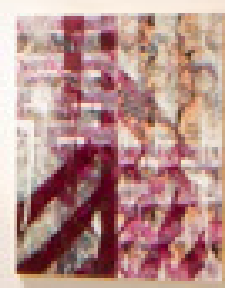
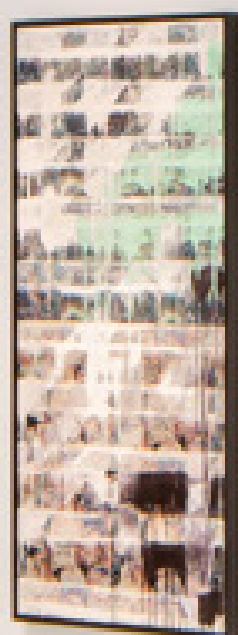














# Addie Langford: Leap

by Glen Mannisto

In her latest paintings Addie Langford has made a leap into the abyss. In place of the elegantly calm explorations of woven space from her last exhibition—where precisely executed dripping brush strokes, composed breathtaking warp and weft abstractions—now kitschy, cartooned, domestic textiles are appropriated and aggressively censored, or intervened upon, by intensely animated lines.

The textiles range from collages of goofy teddy bears, whiskered cats, geometric zebras and, what appears to be, a selection of floral, decorative plates and urns. They are a hybrid combination of figurative cartooning and expressive angular abstractions. Aside from the decorative, if not banal, domestic imagery, the textiles themselves possess an uncanny feature. They are jacquard weavings which have the unique quality of being two-sided or reversible, with the flipside being a negative image of the “good side,” or a ghost of itself. In five of her largest paintings Langford has used both sides of the jacquard as support, as underpainting, as psychological palimpsest, to suggest diptychs. So, before Langford has laid down a splotch of paint there is a maze of textile figures to deal, with, and respond to.

The textile used in the painting “Phthalo Green/Cornflower/Cebra,” has a lattice pattern of alternating zebra images and hide patterns which Langford engages in a dialogue. She overlays the jacquard with muscular, ruled brushstrokes of profoundly dark, transparent, green, which she, alternates with cornflower blue, both pulled from the color of the lattice. The green ruled lines bend and make a fence-like perspective to throw the whole pictorial plane into an inventive graphic disarray. The overall effect is a sense of dance, almost a moiré-like movement, with Langford employing the textile, not as picture but as a visual incident or visual noise.

By using jacquard textiles as a support, she elevates their wonky graphic presence into a material for creating a stunning occurrence, something not seen before, a what-is-that performance? We’re looking at a visual enigma --neither abstraction nor figuration -- a graphic equation, packed with wonderful hijinks. The scale and ruled lines on “Phthalo Green/Cornflower/Cebra,” suggest the American flag but even more so in “Mint/Maroon/Oso,” where the blood red and minty white brush strokes over teddy bears might suggest a critique of this imagery, if not of figurative imagery itself.

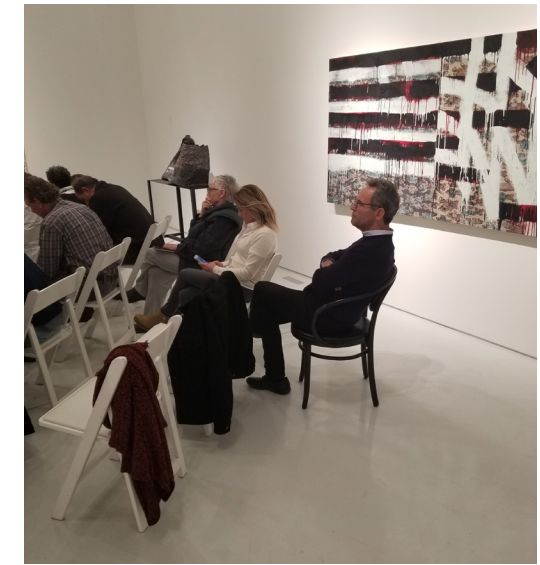
More extreme is “Fuchsia/Tangerine/Gatos,” which is a symphonic maze of Romanesque Baroque stripes. Here Langford has moved from the cerebral-serene, abstraction of her past to a new emotional pitch, graphing space, moving dynamically from calibrating to creating. This process continues in the vertical format painting, “Pink/Aubergine/Gatos,” with kittens peering through a latticed grid, the painterly gestures, coalescing with the kittens, that seem illuminated from within suggest, the physics of light itself, naturally occurring phenomena and wonders such as the Aurora Borealis.

As with Langford’s past work, gravity has governed the thinned out acrylic paint that she employs and elegantly controls. Her gorgeously crafted brush work and gravity drips are evidence of her sure hand and engagement with the physics of her own body. In her last suite of work the drips were the main event, now they are about the conditions at the time of the occurrence, because the new works are an occurrence, figure meets abstraction. The textiles are engaged by abstract marks, or expressions driven by the textile’s provocative imagery.

We can locate Langford biographically as an energetic, intellectual Southern artist working in liberal, Midwest Detroit. An artist who makes hauntingly beautiful paintings with embedded flag echo’s that psychologically engage the American Landscape mixing history into the drips or possible tears.

Langford also has a persistent historic engagement with ceramics and five new ceramic vessels celebrate the technique of consciously building fragile forms that are in a state of change, of disruption. The large, collapsing “grocery bags” they suggest, are tediously assembled tiers of cross-hatched, lozenges of stoneware and terra cotta clay & porcelain. Glazed in a similar palette to the paintings they collectively constitute a suite of works that echo the creative force that gravity inflicts on the artist’s interaction with and expression of the world.









# Notes on Tuttle, Rouan, Hantai, and Binion

by Addie Langford



# Note on Braiding<sup>1</sup>

by François Rouan

Braiding: the interlacing of two images, method of interior prospection.

Far indeed from the manifestation of a subjectivity folded upon itself, the project of expression-communication is situated at the level of the most essential rhythm, at the level of the most intimate respiration.

Different phases of the realization of the picture [tableau]:

a/ Impregnation of color on canvas by immersion in baths of painting of each of the two surfaces. Recuperation of the poetic potential of chance.

b/ Destruction of the colored surfaces from the first operation through a repeated graphic intervention: trames [lit weft; screen tone [printing], fig. frame(s)].

c/ Decoupage and braiding of two images tightening [pour tendre] into a “condensation.”

This work opens out onto [debouche] in the realization of a complex network, a veritable thread allowing me to capture unforeseen crystallizations, and to bring back to the surface an interior light. This light constitutes the ideal space of respiration, the black picture [tableau] upon which is inscribed the project of expression-communication.

On the canvas, not a message, but the trace of a vibration which becomes embodied with its vehicle [image].

Paris, 8 January 1971

\* This note was published in the catalogue for a salon, undoubtedly the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles [Salon of New Realities], in 1971. Note by François Rouan.

François Rouan, “Tissage,” *Notes du regard* [Notes from Looking] (Paris: Galilée, 2011), 23. Translated by Michael Stone-Richards.

1. *Tissage*, also, plaiting, weaving.





