

## Harmony Hammond

ALEXANDER GRAY ASSOCIATES  
510 West 26th Street  
May 19–June 25

The mixed-media work in Harmony Hammond's new show has a rare presence, evoking the sides of barges, stucco walls, and flesh. She uses oil paint, layered strips of canvas, and hardware to imbue her irregular reworkings of fraught modernist forms—monochrome painting, the grid—with luminous, repaired, weathered, and weather-proofed qualities. Here, grommets function as both marks and portals to the blank wall behind, punched into her canvases and arranged in rows. In the grand, off-white *Witness*, 2014, an elegant fold in the canvas suggests a horizon line or a shirt seam. In the upstairs gallery, fiery grommet-grid variations, one in yellow and one in red (*Naples Grid* and *Red Stack*, both 2015), are dramatic exceptions to the show's subdued palate.

In this latest installment of the artist's lifelong undertaking to recuperate and subvert the gendered associations of her materials and processes, the sturdy paintings find a delicate foil in a series of text-based "Ledger Drawings," 2015. As in grammar-school blackboard punishments, words repeat in neat rows on graph paper. In tireless script, Hammond has written loaded terms that attach to the late-career woman artist. One drawing reads "diva" again and again; another accuses or dismisses with "your generation." Hammond, an influential figure of the 1970s feminist art movement, notes in the press release that she executes these colored-ink drawings at night, reiterating the put-downs to "render them powerless." Repetition transforms them for the viewer, too: One easily un-recognizes the words and lets them become curlicued forms, blurring into stripes. Intimate and forceful, the drawings stand as spells against not just sexist disregard but also—in the spirit of Hammond's feminist formalist oeuvre—the false opposition of abstraction and personal/political content.



Harmony Hammond, *Ledger Drawings Suite A* (detail), 2015, ink on paper, 12 x 9 1/2". From the series "Ledger Drawings," 2015.

— Johanna Fateman