

Harmony Hammond: Inappropriate Longings at Alexander Gray Associates (Video)

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Alexander Gray Associates presents its third exhibition of work by Harmony Hammond (b.1944), *Harmony Hammond: Inappropriate Longings*. Featuring an installation and a selection of mixed media paintings and works on paper, the exhibition highlights the artist's practice during the 1990s. These works' use of materials as visual metaphors for desire, violence, place, and the effects of time, foul weather, and foul play continue Hammond's ongoing project to "bring content into the world of abstraction."

Hammond's material metaphors referencing both the body and the landscape create "troubled sites," what The New York Times art critic Holland Cotter has called "... implied narratives of innocence lost through political, domestic, and psychological violation." Combining oil paint, canvas, and paper with non-traditional materials such as latex rubber, linoleum, straw, leaves, and hair, along with weathered objects salvaged from abandoned farms, she constructs works that occupy a space between painting and sculpture while hinting at transgressions and violence within the domestic setting.

Central to the exhibition is the large tableaux *Inappropriate Longings* (1992). The installation combines a triptych of oil paint, latex rubber, and linoleum with a metal gutter, a water trough, and dried leaves attached to or placed in front of the painting. The words "goddamn dyke" incised into the skin-like latex of the triptych interject a violated bodily presence into the work that challenges both the heteronormativity of rural America and abstract painting. As Hammond writes, "There's a sense that something happened, but what? The painting is material witness to a crime scene giving clues of events and actions not fully revealed."

Hammond continues this evocative material experimentation in other works in the show. In the diptych *Untitled* (1995), for example, she uses straw and red paint to call up multiple bodies almost touching. Writing about the work, she states, "It's about the meeting place, the crack, the space between. The tension of uneasy juxtaposition. A site of negotiation." Cumulatively, the works in the exhibition continue Hammond's post-minimal engagement with materials and process and a survivor aesthetic that began with her fabric sculptures in the early 1970s while also anticipating her materially informed paintings of the last decade.

Press release provided by [Alexander Gray Associates](#)