

Alexander Gray Associates

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Bandaged Grid #1, 2015, oil and mixed media on canvas, 44.25h x 76.5w in

Harmony Hammond

May 19 – June 25, 2016

Alexander Gray Associates presents its second exhibition of work by Harmony Hammond (b.1944), including paintings, monotypes and ink drawings dating from 2014 to the present. A pioneer of feminist and queer discourse, Hammond's earliest feminist work combined gender politics with post-minimal concerns of materials and process, frequently occupying a space between painting and sculpture—a focus that continues to this day. Her thick near-monochrome paintings of the last decade participate in the narrative of modernist abstraction; at the same time they insist on an oppositional discourse of feminist and queer content. Their focus on materiality and the indexical, suggesting topographies of body derive from and remain in conversation with her feminist work of the 1970s.

In her recent paintings featured in the exhibition, Hammond grommets a field or grid of holes into her canvases. Layering patches of fabric, straps and grommets intermittently with oil paint, she builds textured near-monochromatic surfaces of earthy reds, deep-blacks, dusty beiges, and creamy whites, activated by light and cast shadow. The gridded field of grommets physically opens the painting surface alluding to layers, spaces and histories buried below as well as body orifices. A close examination of what at first glance might appear to be minimal monochrome grid paintings, reveals a disturbance or rupture as underlying layers of color are visible through cracks, crevices and holes, interrupting both surface and grid. For Hammond, "It's about what's hidden, muffled, covered up or over, pushing up from underneath, asserting itself, suggesting agency and voice."

In *Bandaged Grid #1* (2015), she applies fraying strips of leftover canvas to evoke a bandaged body, noting, "a bandage always implies a wound. A bandaged grid implies an interruption of the narrative of the modernist grid and therefore, an interruption of utopian egalitarian order...a precarity. But also, however fragile, the possibility of holding together, of healing."

Works on paper are also a key part of Hammond's oeuvre. The irregular surfaces she achieved in her paintings are present in her grommets monotypes, which art writer Lucy Lippard calls *grommetypes*. Linking the works on paper to her painting practice, she comments, "It's about accumulation, not blending." Also on view are two suites of Hammond's *Ledger Drawings* (2015), text-based drawings on ledger book pages. In these works, Hammond's practice as a critic and art historian becomes self-

reflexive. The drawings repeat words and phrases that the artist has noticed used to denigrate late-career, female artists—“obsolete,” “vintage,” “your generation,” “dragon lady,” “get your due,” and “diva.” Re-inscribed on paper originally intended to inventory commodities or services, Hammond exhausts the words’ intended meaning, rendering them powerless, and reclaiming these phrases on her own terms.

Harmony Hammond’s work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in venues such as Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, Austria (2016); Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA (2015); Museum Brandhorst, Munich, Germany (2015); RedLine Art Space, Denver, CO (2014); National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. (2011); MoMA PS1, New York (2008); Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2008); Museo de Arte Contemporaneo Internacional Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City (2007); Neue Galerie, Graz, Austria (2007); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2007); SITE Santa Fe, NM (2002); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (1996); Brooklyn Museum, New York (1985); New Museum, New York (1982), Downtown Whitney Museum, New York (1978), Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, MN (1968); among others. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Brooklyn Museum, NY; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Phoenix Art Museum, AZ; New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe; and the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, among others. She has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim, Joan Mitchell, Pollock–Krasner, Esther and Adolph Gottlieb and Art Matters Foundations, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts, among others. Hammond’s book, *Wrappings: Essays on Feminism, Art and the Martial Arts*, (TSL Press, 1984) is considered a seminal publication on 1970’s Feminist art. Her groundbreaking book *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History* (Rizzoli, 2000) received a Lambda Literary Award, and remains the primary text on the subject. In 2013, Hammond was honored with The College Art Association Distinguished Feminist Award. She received both the College Art Association’s Women’s Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award and Anonymous was a Woman Award in 2014.