

ARTFORUM

"Constraction"

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Hot on the heels of "Substraction," a group exhibition that featured gritty, street-inspired abstractions by six young painters, this show, organized by Kathy Grayson, presents a focused selection of artists using conceptual and minimalist approaches. The earlier exhibition posited the gestures of Yves Klein and Jackson Pollock as primary influences on the likes of Sterling Ruby and Kristin Baker. Here, references are also easy to find. Ara Peterson's wall-based sculpture of laser-cut patterns, and the conceptual schemes deployed in paintings by Xylor Jane and Tauba Auerbach, for example, all bring to mind Sol LeWitt. Yet a sense of resuscitation seems far from the point, even if the gallery's press materials urge a revival of "strategies in abstraction that have fallen into disuse" and "reshuffling the deck of conceptualism and minimalism." Although uneven at times, "Constraction" makes a stronger case for innovation than for slavish inheritance.

Black-and-white geometric abstraction dominates the show. Jane's five small canvases of dots, one of which is based on information gathered in personal journals that describes near-death experiences, deploy a self-generated system that determines the color of the dots in the paintings. The works' task-based underpinning nonetheless allows imperfections, such as smudges, to emerge. As one moves further away from them, the canvases resolve into psychedelic patterns that complement Auerbach's Op-art paintings, installed on an adjacent wall. Recalling Liz Deschenes's recent series of "Moiré" photographs, Auerbach's new works mark a departure from her previous, text-based paintings. Fields of black Ben-day dots on large white canvases resemble a crumpled sheet of spotted paper from a distance. These stark patterns echo in Auerbach's tessellated ceramic-tile floor, which stretches across the room to Peterson's computer-designed and handpainted sculpture, itself a mosaic of wavy black and white lines. Rounding out the show are more minimal yet colorful works by Peter Coffin, Joe Bradley, and Mitzi Pederson.