

ARTFORUM

“Performing the Grid”

BEN MALTZ GALLERY AT THE OTIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

9045 Lincoln Boulevard

January 23–May 15

There's nothing more satisfying than a grid, at least for those daunted by the blank page of unfettered creative freedom. But perhaps the latter is an illusion, and no attempt at creativity exists without constraint. The sixteen artists in “Performing the Grid,” for instance, take full pleasure in being line-bound.

Most of the works here encourage proximity not only to the object displayed but to the practice behind it as well. For example, Charles Gaines's triptych portrait *Faces: Men and Women, #14 “Charles Hanzieck,”* 1978, draws viewers toward Gaines's tiny handwritten numbers in hundreds of pixel-like squares. Xylor Jane's manic accounting of time—in which the artist assiduously charts days, years, moons, and millennia—manifests itself in a series of eleven drawings, each wild and beautiful. And straight from the artist's notebook is Kelly Nipper's *Floyd on the Floor: Performance Notes, 2007*: six framed pages including scrawled texts on dance theorist Rudolf Laban's principles of “Space Harmony”—Laban is also in the show—next to collaged cutouts of geometric patterns and crystalline gems.

Emily Roysdon's compelling video diptych, *Sense and Sense, 2010*, features an aerial shot of artist MPA's attempt to walk while lying on her side. Taking place on the ground of a Stockholm public square known for political protests, Roysdon captures a clash between bodies and the way space is engineered to contain them, which is decidedly different in tone from the harmony evoked by other pieces in the exhibition. In all these divergent works—and there are more notables to be named—the grid becomes a measure of time, movement, and labor as well as a source of pleasure and generation. Fueled by the slow and steady ticking of practice and research, these pieces are the fruit of sustained experimentation, and spending time with them feels equally productive.



Emily Roysdon, *Sense and Sense, 2010*, two channel video, color, sound, 15 mins 25 seconds.

— *Samara Davis*