

Rebecca Ward

JUNE 1 - AUGUST 11, 2017

“Is not the most erotic portion of a body where the garment gapes? In perversion (which is the realm of textual pleasure) there are no “erogenous zones” (a foolish expression, besides); it is intermittence, as psychoanalysis has so rightly stated, which is erotic: the intermittence of skin flashing between two articles of clothing (trousers and sweater), between two edges (the open-necked shirt, the glove, and the sleeve); it is this flash itself which seduces, or rather: the staging of an appearance-as-disappearance.”— Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* [1]



Installation view of *Rebecca Ward* at The FLAG Art Foundation, 2017. Photography by Steven Probert.

The FLAG Art Foundation is pleased to present the first New York solo exhibition by Rebecca Ward, featuring new paintings and small-scale sculptures, on view June 1–August 11, on its 10th floor gallery.

Drawing inspiration from Minimalism, hard-edge painting, and Arte Povera, Ward’s banded, sewn, and deconstructed canvases explore the rich territory between sculpture and painting. Materiality and process are central to her practice, specifically the wall works, which evoke “architectural garments” ripped, unwoven, and re-stitched from flesh-toned canvas duck, leather hide, and silk organza. In her canvas works, the artist painstakingly removes the weft (horizontal) threads of the fabric to reveal the underlying stretcher bars, highlighting the physical structure of the painting itself.

Surface gives way to structure in *theory of tides*, 2017, and *harmonic analysis*, 2017, wherein planes of canvas converge at contrast-colored and machine-sewn seams, juxtaposing the precision of hard-edge painting with the presence of handiwork. This juncture, a meeting of varied fabrics and textures, creates subtle shifts in color and shadow, and becomes the hinge on which these works pivot between two dimensional paintings and three dimensional objects. In the artist’s transparent and stitched painting, the infinite use of finite means, 2017, (and other pieces from the series) linear forms create ambiguous, figurative shapes, suggestive of the body.

In the center of the gallery, the artist presents a constellation of geometric sculptures that allude to Utopian cityscapes, reminiscent of the International and Brutalist architectural styles of early

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to mid-20th century. In these sculptures, marble and plaster substitute the béton brut (raw concrete) championed by Louis Kahn and Le Corbusier. In anthropomorphism, 2017, Ward explores the architecture and abstraction of language through repetition and disintegration of plaster casts of a single letter. Alternating bands of stone form the stacked sculpture, permission structures, 2017. Permission structures is a suggestive title, but the term itself is commonly used in politics and marketing as a tactic to turn people's opinion favorably in their direction. The title also suggests a power play between words – a subversion of opposing dynamics. Ward's artworks contain such contradictions; they reveal and obscure, and by their nature, entice viewers to closely investigate contrasts in line and material, modulations in color, and multi-dimensional layers.

About:

Rebecca Ward (b. 1984, Waco, TX) is a painter and sculptor living and working in Brooklyn, NY. Ward earned an MFA at the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY, in 2012, and a BA at the University of Texas at Austin, TX, in 2006. She has been the subject of solo exhibitions, including aphasia, Ronchini Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2015); indulgences, Exchiesetta, Polignano a Mare, Italy (2015); Artgenève, Luxembourg & Dayan, Geneva, Switzerland (2015); among others. Ward's work has been included in numerous group exhibitions, including Eastwing Biennial: Artificial Realities, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, United Kingdom (2016); Making & Unmaking, curated by Duro Olowu, Camden Art Centre, London, United Kingdom (2016); The Tim Sayer Bequest, The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, United Kingdom (2016); Space Between, curated by Stephanie Roach & Louis Grachos, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY (2015); Post-Analog Painting, The Hole, New York, NY (2015); The Shaped Canvas, Revisited, Luxembourg & Dayan, New York, NY (2014); among others. She has been the subject of reviews and articles in Artrcritical, The Brooklyn Rail, Interview Magazine, Hyperallergic, New American Painting, Harper's Bazaar, Vogue among others.

Footnote:

[1] Roland Barthes, 'Where the Garment Gapes', extract from *Pleasure of the Text*, 1975, reproduced in ed. Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion Theory: A Reader*, London: Routledge, 2007, p. 601.