

Harmony Hammond

11.06.11

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10.15.11-11.26.11 Dwight Hackett Projects

Seething with bumps and snags, Harmony Hammond's new paintings collapse many divergent qualities onto one profoundly built-up surface. *Flap* 2008-11, for instance, features a taut seam running horizontally across the width of the canvas. Taken by itself, the seam mimics any number of gendered phenomena in the world that we tend to read as having sexed characteristics: the envelope-style closure of throw pillow covers, or the opening of a dress shirt. This combined with the thick, spackled, golden veneer (and the additional layers of hue that viewers can discern if they inspect the side of the canvas) gives the work an air of accreted gender performance: it's an object dressed and re-dressed in drag a thousand times, resulting in a pebbly surface that's readable as neither.

Sienna, 2010, has the same back-and-forth conversation but with sentience instead of gender. Flaps of canvas wrap around a frame and are fixed in place by a layer of sienna paint, the work's most discernible aesthetic feature. The material tension beneath the paint creates a congealed immanence. Are the straps about to rumble and burst through the color, or does the paint act as a sealant that also permeates the cloth and chokes it off completely from motion and life? Here Hammond demonstrates her fluency in painting: in Alberto Burri's "*Sacchi*" (Sacks) series of the 1950s, for instance, viewers couldn't tell if the materials were rising up or being embalmed or both. Hammond's joke on the "bound" state of painting, however, is her own much-welcomed innovation.