



Now and Then, 2022, Oil and mixed media on canvas, Approx. 48 x 48 in each (121.9 x 121.9 cm each); 48 3/8 x 96 3/4 in overall (122.9 x 245.7 cm overall)

Harmony Hammond: *Accumulations*

New York: April 27–June 10, 2022

Alexander Gray Associates, New York presents Harmony Hammond: *Accumulations*, the artist's sixth exhibition with the Gallery. The show features a selection of paintings from the last three years that continue Hammond's project of imbuing abstraction with bodily content and a corporeal narrative, disrupting the utopian myth of modernist abstraction. Underlying this practice is the artist's belief that materials and the ways they are manipulated can bring social and political content into formal abstraction.

Sited in the intersection between painting and sculpture, Hammond's new works expand on her signature thick paint and near-monochrome palette. She explains her heavily layered surfaces—"stained and disturbed" by colors asserting themselves from underneath—as dealing with "material transformation and healing." Works like *Chenille #11* (2020–21) and *Chenille #12* (2021) incorporate rough burlap, straps, and grommeted holes in layers of paint. While the raised patterns and warm white color recall the soft texture and domestic warmth of chenille bedspreads, the irregularities of the torn and frayed fabric revealing obscured color "mirror the imperfections and experiences written upon our bodies."

Building on her ongoing series of *Chenilles*, Hammond's *Cross Paintings* are punctuated with protrusions, holes, and seams, foregrounding notions of suture and concealment. For the artist, the agitated cross form in *Black Cross II* (2020–21) simultaneously serves as a stand-in for the figure, an intersection, and a plus sign, signifying both agency and accumulation. She describes,

“The pieced and patched background pushes up from underneath the cross form, struggling to fit in or pull away from the confines of the painting surface and rectangle.”

The occasional incorporation of repurposed linens—tablecloths, towels, placemats, and quilt covers—situates the composition’s suggestive narrative within a domestic environment. In *Bandaged Grid #10 (La Mesa)* (2022), the repetition and order of the grid—rooted in both textiles and modernist painting—is interrupted by color and strips of fabrics emerging from the field of grommeted holes above a torn and stained embroidered tablecloth. While the layered grid evokes the bandaging of the body, the ripped, patched, and stained sections accentuate what is covered—the narrative hidden beneath the surface.

In many of the works, Hammond employs women’s traditional arts as a metaphor for female bodies. *Patched* (2022) incorporates a stained and frayed red and off-white patterned quilt cover. By positioning slit blood-stained cotton patches centrally within the cross-like areas of the grid-based chain pattern of the quilt cover, Hammond charges the stitched composition with gendered brutality. She states, “the painting alludes to voices of resistance that refuse to be silenced.” Responding to social unrest and political upheaval—including the United States Supreme Court’s reversal of *Roe vs. Wade*—the punctured and patched surface of the work speaks to the violence and precarity of our current times.

Further highlighting Hammond’s interest in “material engagement,” diptychs like *Then and Now* and *Now and Then* (both 2022) juxtapose the artist’s visual strategies from the 1970s with her current formal and conceptual concerns. These two-part works combine her *Bandaged Quilts* with panels that recall her *Weave Paintings* (1973–77). In these compositions, Hammond draws parallels between minimalist monochromatic painting and vernacular gendered craft traditions, advancing her mission of advocating for an expanded art history that challenges reductive, sexist historical narratives of abstraction.

Alexander Gray Associates is a contemporary art gallery in New York City and Germantown, NY. Through exhibitions, research, and artist representation, the Gallery spotlights artistic movements and artists active in the twentieth and twenty-first century. Influential in cultural, social, and political spheres, these artists are notable for creating work that crosses geographic borders, generational contexts, and artistic disciplines. Alexander Gray Associates is an organization committed to anti-racist and feminist principles.

New York: Tuesday–Saturday, 10:30 AM–6:00 PM

Germantown: Friday–Sunday, 12:00 PM–6:00 PM, and by appointment