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'Raw Graces': Amy Feldman imbues her formalism with a bit of humor

By Nirmala Nataraj

For Brooklyn abstract painter Amy Feldman, under-construction and seemingly half-bait figures present no obstacle to creating a compelling narrative.

The works in her new exhibition at the Gregory Lind Gallery, titled "Raw Graces," are full of large-scale, gray-black acrylic forms that are constructed quickly, casually and in the present tense. Anthropomorphic forms and symbols likely to be stumbled upon in an urban landscape collude with negative space to create works that are both geometrically precise and intentionally loopy.

Feldman describes her works as containing a variety of art-historical references. "I have an affiliation for places and things that are beautiful yet rough around the edges, imbued with toxicity and poise," she says, noting that you see a lot of this living in New York City.

Feldman's artistic influences range from Cubism (she learned about volume and mass in flat space by studying Picasso at an early age) to the works of Jean Arp, Ellsworth Kelly, Shirley Jaffe and Mary Heilmann. She describes her work as abstract but injected with a liberal dose of pop iconography. Cartoon abstractions and giant drips are part of Feldman's oeuvre.

In recent years, Feldman has been pursuing a more back-to-basics approach to abstraction,



Gregory Lind Gallery photos

Amy Feldman's "Squared Up" (2013), top, and "Ohm Home" (2013) are part of the painter's Gregory Lind Gallery show.

in which formalism is presented humorously, arms akimbo, tongue in cheek. In her works, "refinement materializes through process and the actual performance of painting."

Recurring images like fluffy clouds (which could also be beards) and bold chevrons are found throughout her works and are meant to create personal associations. "Good painting creates a psychological connection with the viewer. ... The iconic forms and stretched geometries of my paintings make funny allusions to a complex web of collective and personal relationships, but they ultimately stay true to the abstraction."

Despite the simplicity of the works, Feldman's pieces create elemental connections with viewers. Because of their large scale, they are meant to address the viewer's body and play with the illusionist space of the painting, as well as the viewer's physical space.

"We are living in a digital age where information travels fast, and I'd like for my works to call attention to the immediacy of reception, but seek a visual clarity that demands pause."

A glimpse into Feldman's works might belie that she plays liberally with possibility and failure in her process. And unlike painters who may spend an exorbitant amount of time perfecting a piece, Feldman's approach is rigorous while encompassing the more interesting aspects of abandoning a painting at the right moment.

"I have to feel confident that, in all its off-handed brevity, the painting is perfectly complete, and the forms feel easy and clearly hit the viewer. Often, the less I do to the surface, the more there is to experience."

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