



AMY FELDMAN

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STARK TYPES



## Great Gray

These are seemingly simple paintings of which there could in fact be so much to say—though the thoughtful viewer will always wonder how to say what there is to say of them, since the paintings themselves, cunningly evasive of the words they nonetheless provoke, offer so little clue as to their preferred verbal accompaniment. Their impact is first of all physical. But I'd start by remarking that to really appreciate them takes a certain relish for the flavors of gray—a sort of wine taster's delight in sniffing, sipping, and rolling around in the mouth of one's eye (I hope the metaphor is not too grotesque) the subtly distinct achromatic tones of Feldman's paintings. The differences from painting to painting are delicate, and perhaps in the eyes of some viewers insignificant compared to the graphic force of the big, blunt, often cartoonlike abstract shapes they embody. And subtlety may not be the first thing you'd expect when faced with the sense of enthusiastic energy with which Feldman wallops her paint onto the canvas, leaving splatters flying every which way. Prepare to be surprised. As the artist herself once put it, her forms are “carefully articulated yet under-polished,” which is to say the deliberate roughness of effect should not distract you from noticing her fastidious attention to rightness of construction. It would be a mistake to see in Feldman's work only its brash vitality and not the more reflective aspect embodied in these myriad shades of gray, the color or noncolor that can never shed its association with the neutral, ambivalent, saturnine, pensive—gray days, gray matter, *éminence grise*. In painting, gray conjures a tradition that includes Jasper Johns, Gerhard Richter, and Brice Marden, and before them Whistler, Manet, and their beloved Spaniards.

Keeping Feldman's romance with gray in mind, consider this: For their shared sense of loose, spontaneous geometry and insouciant, almost punkish *élan*, one would naturally cite Mary Heilmann as the most evident model for Feldman's brand of unbuttoned formalism. “We artists channel the artists that worked before us,” as Heilmann herself once told Ross Bleckner; of course Feldman channels a host of familiar spirits, going back beyond Heilmann to take suggestions from Al Held and Tony Smith, to be sure, but from the likes of Tex Avery too. But has Heilmann (whose color sensibility one imaginative critic once compared to “the summer-print bathing suits sold at Wal-Mart”) ever made a predominantly gray painting? Having followed her work as closely as I could since 1986, I don't recall ever seeing one. So how is it that an artist who on other levels seems so influenced by Heilmann has been able to rein in her palette to such a limited range of grays on white? The beginning of an answer would be the observation that in fact Feldman's palette never does seem reined in. I'm not ready to swear that Feldman's grays can do anything that Heilmann's blazing panoply of ripe primaries and juicy secondaries can do—that will take a lot more time to tell—but they can do an awful lot, from quasi-rococo fluffiness to quasi-minimalist implacability. I am suddenly reminded of Paul Valéry's observation that “artists need to understand each other just sufficiently to differ. The same applies to philosophers.”

In any case, and contrary to its reputation for blandness, indefinability, and gloom, in Feldman's hands gray always feels lively and particular; it has bounce. In the push and pull that she sets up between her grays and the white grounds on which she paints with them—and those whites are no more the same from painting to painting than the grays, but that's another story—both forces are equally active. I asked Feldman once whether she spent more time mixing her paints or putting them on the canvas. “About the same,” she responded. “I can spend a whole day trying out mixtures, trying to get just the right one.” The act of painting starts well before a mark is ever put on canvas, and the relative slowness of the preparation balances out the boldness and spontaneity of the gestures just as the gray always balances out the white, no matter how much or how little of either end up in any particular painting. Feldman's work has on occasion been referred to as “drawing with paint on a large scale,” but I have to insist, on the contrary: Whatever it is that Feldman does, it is not “drawing with paint.” It is, quite simply and quite definitely, painting. That Feldman's gray on white approximates the black on white that we associate with drawing (and with writing) is surely a conceit entertained by the paintings and the canny viewer will find it worthwhile being inveigled by the approximation, but to let oneself forget that it is, after all, only a comparison—that would be a shame. As is the case with most other painters, Feldman's paintings come from drawings—and the ink used in those drawings is black, not gray—but the drawings and paintings are very different. Only in painting is gray so various. The point is not just that Feldman shows herself entirely the painter by the care with which she mixes her grays; I could almost even say that this might not be necessary, because—keeping in mind Matisse's observation that with colors, “as their quantities differ, their quality also changes; the colors applied freely show that it is their quantitative relation that produces their quality”—even the same gray would seem different as it appears in different ratios from one canvas to the next.

Another part of the reason for Feldman's work being painting, rather than drawing on canvas, has to do with scale, of course—as we would only expect if we understand that the quantity of a color impinges on its character: Feldman knows how to give lightness of spirit a monumental presence. But scale is never just a matter of scale. Color and facture as well as form can help give painting a scope immeasurable by the yardstick, so those exquisite grays are relevant here too. The kind of size that matters is what looms up in the imagination before it asserts itself on the wall, and lingers on long after you've left the room. By that measure, Feldman's are some of the biggest paintings being made today.

Barry Schwabsky









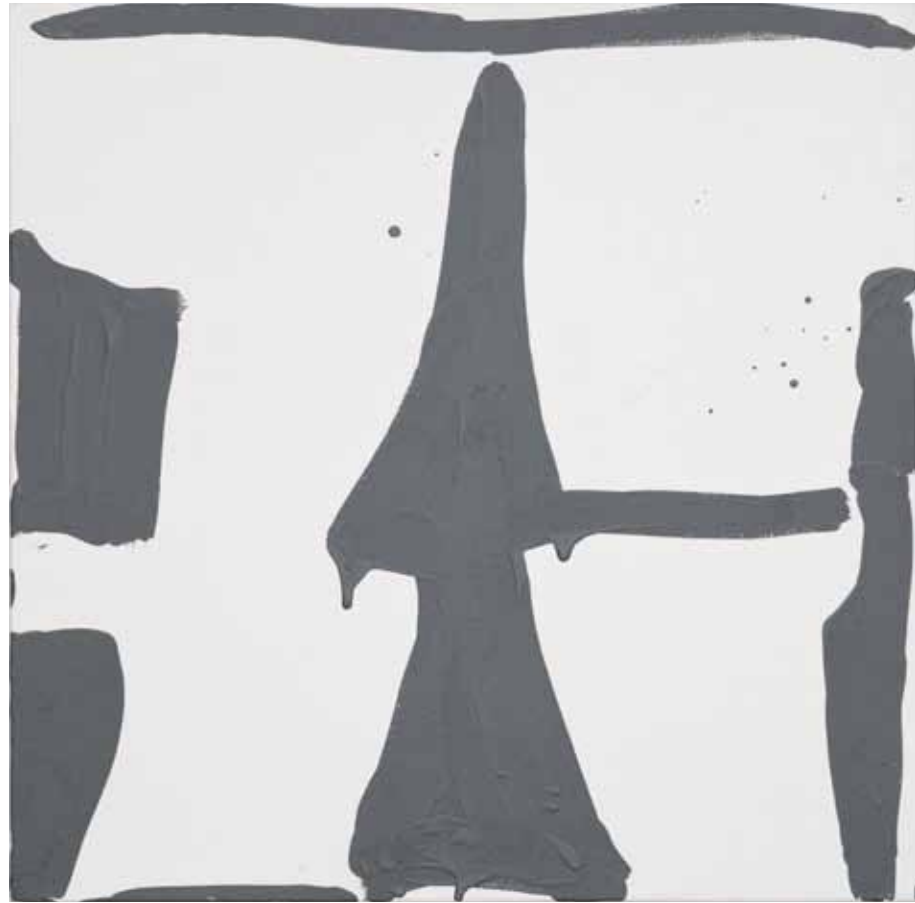
One Gob, 2013  
Acrylic on Canvas  
203x244cm



ANNAELLEGALLERY



Show & Tell, 2013  
Acrylic on Canvas  
203x203cm



Social Dittos, 2013  
Acrylic on Canvas  
51x51cm



Opposite  
Omen Amen, 2013  
Acrylic on Canvas  
203x203cm

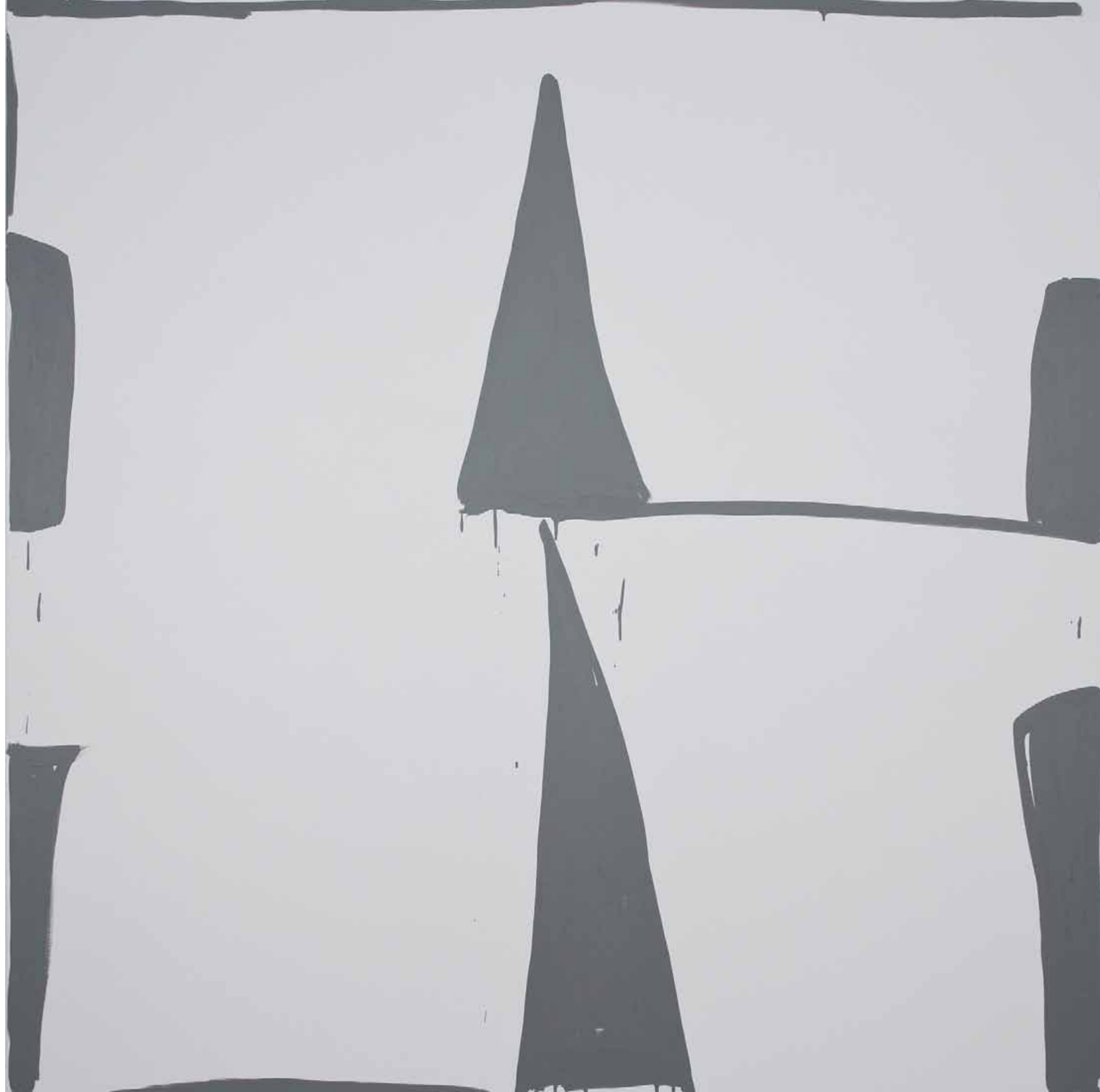






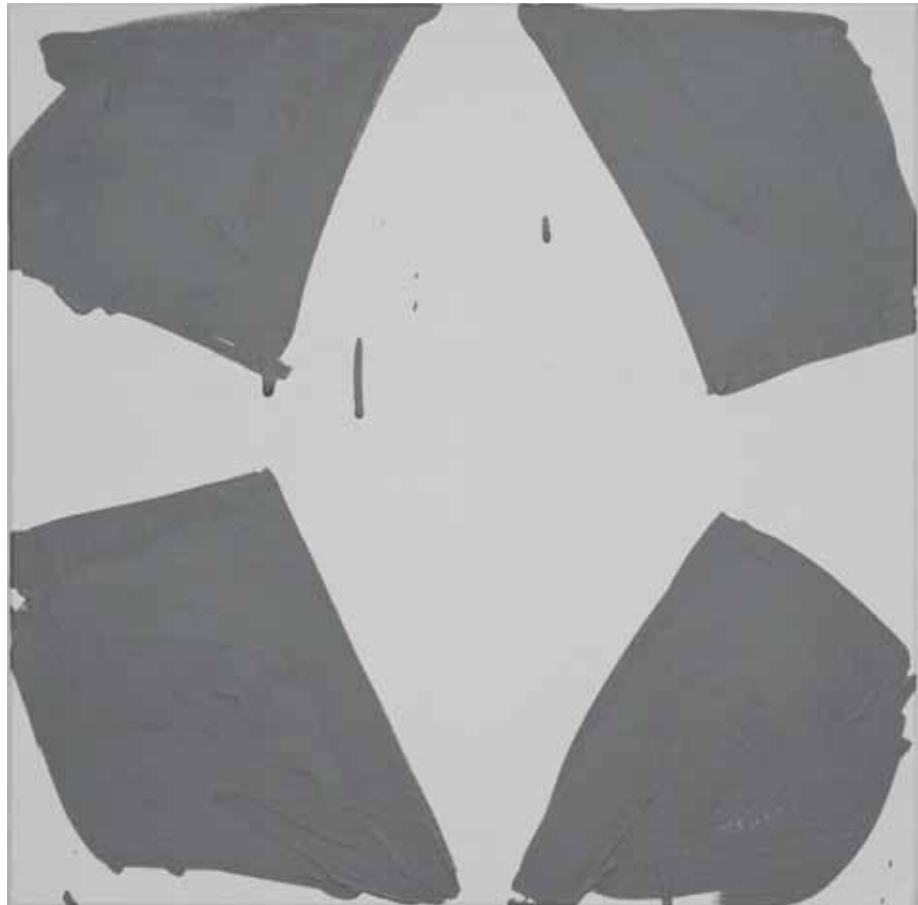
Pioneer Elegies, 2013  
Acrylic on Canvas  
203x228,5cm

Light Flats, 2013  
Acrylic on Canvas  
203x203cm

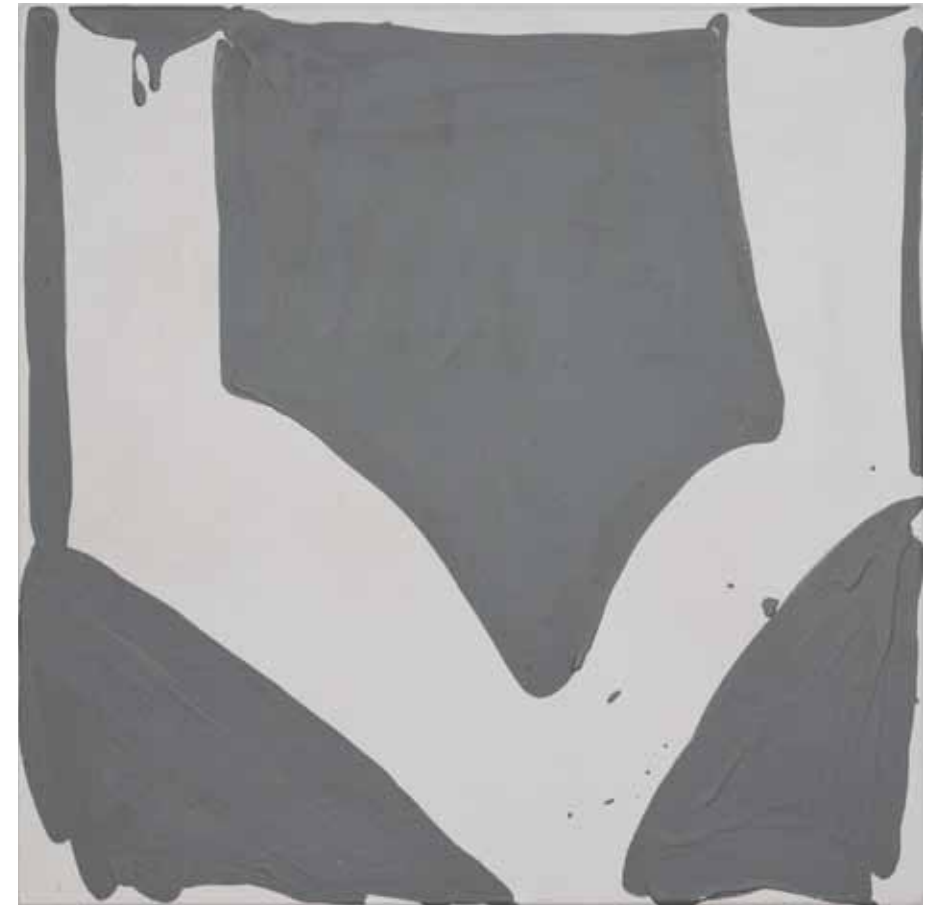








Popular Sublime, 2013  
Acrylic on Canvas  
51x51cm



Essential v Mental, 2013  
Acrylic on Canvas  
51x51cm

## AMY FELDMAN

Born 1981 in USA. Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, USA.

### Education

2003	BFA, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island
2008	MFA, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey
2009	Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

2013	ANNAELLEGALLERY, Stockholm, Sweden, Stark Types EXPO Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, Blackston Gallery, Amy Feldman Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco, California, Raw Graces
2012	Blackston Gallery, New York, New York, Dark Selects
2009	Reynolds Gallery, Richmond, Virginia, Other Imperfect Provisions
2008	Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Proper Harvest

### Selected Group Exhibitions

2014	Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, St. Etienne, France, The New York Moment
2013	Loretta Howard Gallery, New York, New York, DNA: Strands of Abstraction The Abrons Art Center/Henry Street Settlement, New York, New York, An Exhibition on the Centenary of the 1913 Armory Show: DECENTER The Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, New York, The Academy of Arts and Letters Invitational Exhibition Zürcher Studio, New York, New York, Encounter Southfirst Gallery, Brooklyn, New York, Hello Darling
2012	Untitled, Miami Beach, Florida, Blackston Gallery Houston Contemporary, Houston, Texas, Blackston Gallery Galerie Zürcher, Paris, France, Salon Zürcher Edward Thorp Gallery, New York, New York, Assembly BOSI Contemporary, New York, New York, Aggro Crag LA Platform, Los Angeles, California, Blackston Gallery The Fosdick-Nelson Gallery at Alfred University, Alfred, New York, Boundary Hunters The Noyes Museum, Stockton, New Jersey, New Jersey State Council on the Arts Visual Fellowship Awards Exhibition Weekend Gallery, Los Angeles, California JFORD Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Considering the Provisional The Good Children Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana, Ode Oh Owe: Amy Feldman & Ilse Murdock Art Bridge, New York, New York, MsBehavior Airplane, Brooklyn, New York, Fracture
2011	Sue Scott Gallery, New York, New York, Paper A-Z Bronx River Arts Center, Bronx, New York, The Working Title Art 101, Brooklyn, New York, Fekishazy, Feldman, Mahler
2010	Participant Inc., New York, New York, The Collective Show Feature Inc., New York, New York, Power to the People Norte Maar, Brooklyn, New York, Work that Beat
2009	Red Flagg/Coleman Burke Gallery, New York, New York, Chunky Monkey

### Awards

2013	Andree Stone Emerging Artist Prize
2012	Marie Walsh Sharpe Fellowship
2011	Henry Street Settlement/Abrons Art Center Fellowship
2011	The Robert Motherwell Fellowship, The MacDowell Colony
2011	Yaddo Fellowship
2011	New Jersey State Council on the Arts Artist Fellowship
2009	Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture Fellowship
2008	VCU Arts Painting and Printmaking Residency Fellowship at Plant Zero
2008	Giza Daniels Endesha Award
2007	Rutgers University Competitive Pool Funds Scholarship
2006	Rutgers University Teaching Assistant Fellowship
1999	Rhode Island School of Design Trustee Scholarship

### Public Collections

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois

### Selected Press and Publications

Nirmala Nataraj, "Amy Feldman melds poise, rough edges," San Francisco Chronicle, March 6, 2013  
Damien Sausset, "La scene New Yorkaise s'installe chez les Zurcher," Le Quotidien de l'art, Numero 242, October 20, 2012  
Amanda Parmer, "Blackston: Amy Feldman", Art in America, October 2012  
Paul Foster Johnson, The Poetry Project Newsletter, October/November 2012, No. 232  
Roberta Smith, "Art in Review, Amy Feldman: Dark Selects", The New York Times, Friday July 13, 2012  
Roberta Smith, "Museum and Gallery Listings for July 20-26, Amy Feldman: Dark Selects", The New York Times, July 19, 2012  
Stephen Westfall, "Tough Love", catalogue essay for solo exhibition, published by Blackston, New York, July 2012  
Howard Halle, "Critic's Pick: The Five Best Events This Week", TimeOut New York, June 14-June20, 2012  
Doug McClemont, "On the Shows Not to Miss in New York", Saatchi Online Magazine, July 31, 2012  
Elwyn Palmerton, "Review of Amy Feldman's "Dark Selects" at Blackston, The Floating Eyeball, blogspot, July 31, 2012  
Vincent Uribe and Allison Kilburg, "Artist of the Week: Interview with Amy Feldman", LVL3 gallery blog, Chicago, Illinois, February 14, 2012  
Howard Hurst, "Artist to Watch: Amy Feldman", The Art Economist, Vol. 1 Issue 8, October 2011  
Brett Baker, "Painter's Table: Top 10 Best Posts August 2011", The Huffington Post, September 20, 2011  
Valerie Brennan, "Interview with Amy Feldman", Studio Critical, studiocritical.blogspot.com, August 9, 2011  
Sharon Butler, "Abstract Painting: The New Casualists", The Brooklyn Rail, June 2011  
Lisa Williams, "In Conversation: Lisa Williams interviews Amy Feldman", NYArts Magazine, Summer 2011  
Shirley Kaneda and Jon Lutz, "The Working Title", catalogue for exhibition, Bronz River Arts Center, 2010