







Installation view

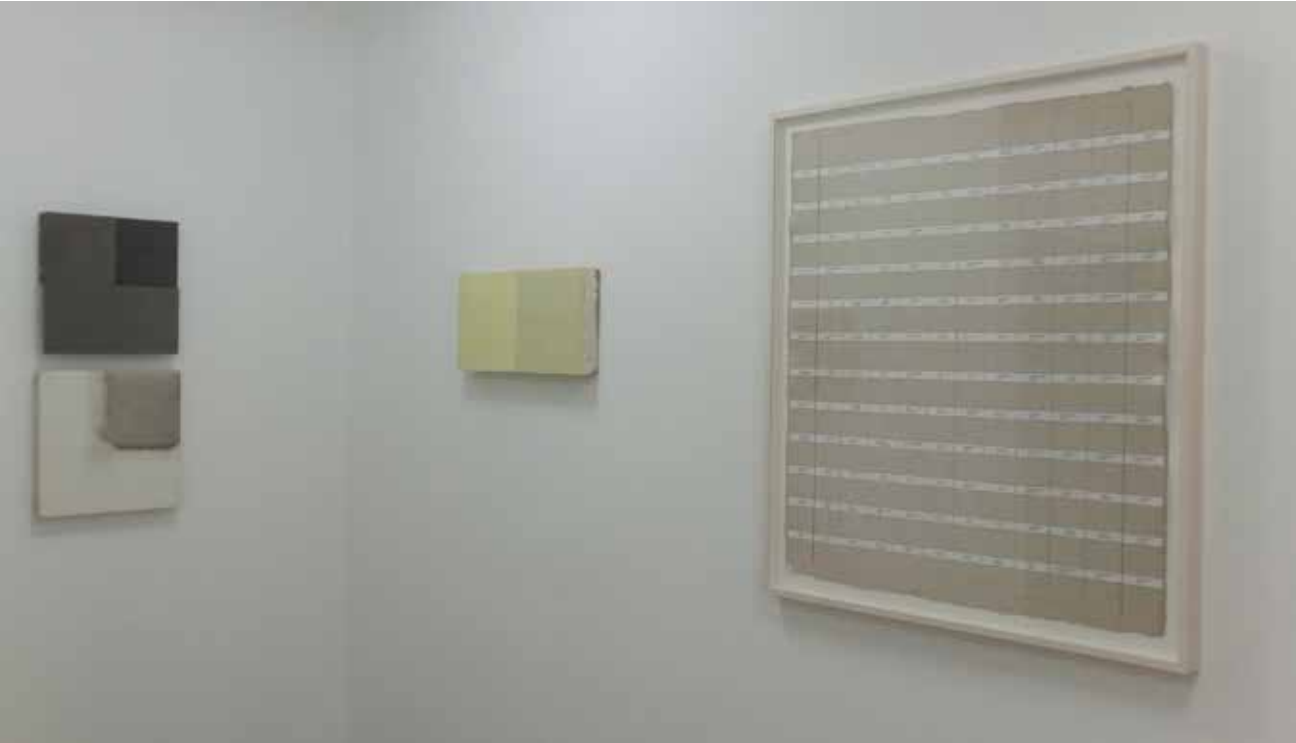
Nancy Haynes  
the painting undressed

3A gallery  
curated by Mieko Meguro

12/12/12 through 1/25/13



Installation view



Installation view

**address/redress/undress**  
**(on the work of Nancy Haynes)**

thomas zummer

*The question of painting does not pertain first or only to painters, much less to aestheticians. It concerns visibility itself, and thus pertains to everything—to sensation in general.*

—Jean-Luc Marion

## address

Philosophy, far from exercising a mastery, performing an annexation, or appropriating the image, finds itself bound up in the visible, arrested and apprehensive in its relation to *painting*, which, one might say, traces itself from itself in its sudden appearance, taking place on and as a surface, the *visible* resident within the *unseen*. This is especially so in abstract painting, where this disposition might seem to be more immediate, and less hidden, than in mimetic representations. While the withdrawal from mimological reference is never total, pure or complete, the reflexive recognition of this condition rediscovers *abstraction* in the most common habituations of the visible.

A painting of water, for example, may be said to capture something of the sea, but what is it that is 'caught' in this re-presentation? An image of what we are accustomed to call 'waves' (note that the reference is most commonly rendered in the plural)? How many waves would have had to pass before the eye of a painter in order to compose such an image? We would also be compelled to ask: what is represented here, and how is that accomplished? What, after all, is a 'wave'? If water is the medium bearing the impression of a 'wave-form' propagated through its substance, and we admit the possibility of the passing of many such movements, what is the relation of a 'wave' to the painting of waves? In a sense this most legible of images appends an *aporia*, a problem, that suffuses and haunts painting and philosophy alike. Photography, often cited for its indexical exactitude, offers no escape, and even definitive instances, such as the *Beaufort Scale* used in identifying and classifying the severity of weather patterns, remain unassailably abstract. What we see when we presume to see a wave is not that at all, and the indexicality of the perception is precisely what is suspended or arrested, invisibility caught by, and caught up in, the visible.

It is here, where familiar determinations between the visible and the invisible are suspended, that we find in the works of Nancy Haynes, a painter, a most subtle and brilliant address of the *aporias* of the image. In early works, such as *Pocket Painting* (1970-73) two surfaces are present, one of gold, and one of a red-ochre clay bole. While the two surfaces occur on separate supports, the supports are contiguous and fixed. Through this contiguity they present a continuous visual surface, secured and constituted through a common convention of viewing painting, from a certain proximity, frontality, and distance. As one steps out of this privileged point of view, to examine the work more closely, or to turn away, one notices the disparity in these surfaces: they do not share the same planar surface, but, as objects, one rests upon the other, and what is now revealed is an empty space, a hole that had been covered over and rendered invisible, a sort of blind for an absence that breaks pictorial space. The arguments over whether such a work fits into the category of the sculptural or the more 'properly' visual register of painting are somewhat trivial in light of the phenomenological precision with which Haynes undoes the relations between the visible and invisible. Gold leaf and the reddish clay body limning the surfaces of this work immediately give rise to references and allusions that exceed the minimal materials of their making. Gold leaf is most often associated with frames, details, and the ornamentation of artifacts and architectures; in this sense, the appearance of Haynes' gold surface also alludes to a displacement: what ordinarily signifies a relation to the exteriority of a work—a framed painting, for example—or a text (as is the case with illuminated manuscripts, title pressings, or gilt edging on the cut pages of a book) is arrested here, putting into question its very nature as a surface. Has



BEAUFORT FORCE 0  
WIND SPEED: LESS THAN 1 KNOT  
SEA: SEA LIKE A MIRROR



BEAUFORT FORCE 11  
WIND SPEED: 56-63 KNOTS  
SEA: WAVE HEIGHT 11.5-16M (37-52FT), EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH WAVES. SMALL-MEDIUM SIZED SHIPS MAY BE LOST TO VIEW BEHIND THE WAVES. SEA COMPLETELY COVERED WITH LONG WHITE PATCHES OF FOAM LYING ALONG WIND DIRECTION. EVERYWHERE, THE EDGES OF WAVE CRESTS ARE BLOWN INTO FROTH.



it contaminated the interiority of a work, by taking its place, covering over an absence now made —almost—visible, through a planar displacement on the z-axis? Does it frame, by occlusion, the empty space of representation, alluding to the absence of what is re-presented, a *nothing* which is now recast, returned to us? That such troublesome unruliness comes to the surface(s) in the works of Nancy Haynes situates them not only as aesthetic and poetic (art)works of the first order in our contemporary milieu, but as profound philosophical ‘objects’ as well. Immanuel Kant’s distinction between *ergon* (work) and *parergon* (non-work), so unavoidably reintroduced through Jacques Derrida’s *La vérité en peinture*, is set to work in Hayne’s complex minimal ‘painting’ —if gold leaf is a reference to a ‘frame’ (*gestell*; an ornamental surround—Walter Benjamin) what does the ‘frame’ frame? In a sense it is neither of the elements that it incompletely covers—neither the red clay bole, nor the absent ‘pocket’ or hole. Jean-Paul Sartre, in the notebooks that he kept during his brief military service, poses the question whether a hole is defined by the absence within a substance, or by the substance that surrounds an absence; Nancy Haynes presents us with a similar problem, sustained and focused within the discursive contours of what one might call post-minimal painting. The deferral from the quotidian to the aesthetic gaze accomplished here a consequently more disturbing event.



**pocket painting** c.1970-73, gold leaf and clay bole, 8" x 8"

## redress

*In itself, perspective exercises a paradox. Even more than that, perspective and paradox are determined by similar characters: both indicate the visible entirely in its withdrawing, discretely but radically. The paradox attests to the visible, while at the same time opposing itself, or rather, while inverting itself; literally, it constitutes a counter-visual, a counter-seen, a counter-appearance that offers in a spectacle to be seen the opposite of what, at first sight, one would expect to see.*

—Jean-Luc Marion

The invisibility of the visible, counterbalanced by the visibility that sustains the surface: what is both given, and given up—*released*—in painting is the invisible,

*(t)hat the painting should appear from itself-*

—Jean-Luc Marion

It is quite common to think of the eye as being 'drawn in' to the perspectival configurations of a painting, drawing or a photograph. But where does the eye *go*? *There* is, in a sense, no place for the eye to reside; paintings, drawings, photographs are more or less flat surfaces. The paradox that Jean-Luc Marion describes has to do with precisely this sort of question: why do we not see what is there—flat patches of regular or irregular tonal gradations and colors—and why do we see something which is not? For Marion, in the case of perspective

*the gaze pierces the void [le vide], without any obstacle or limit than its own exhaustion; not only does it cross through this void, since it does not aim at any object defined by a horizon, but perspective's gaze pierces the void without end because it crosses through it for nothing . . .*

What is unseen is not there, or rather it is covered over by what purports to be there, a catachresis that suspends the gaze in an interminable trajectory. Abstract painting— and Nancy Haynes is exemplary here— inverts the terms of this paradox, posing a visibility that belies the visible, insofar as it interrupts or occludes the passage of the eye, arresting the gaze on a surface now become both referent and reference. In the sense defined here, abstraction is the most empirical, and the most sensate of practices in painting.

But how to understand abstraction? The first definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is: *to draw away—*

(at first, like its Latin original, a participle and adjective):

*drawn, derived, extracted; withdrawn, drawn away, removed, separated—even secretly, therefore: to 'secret'—sometimes to purloin. . .*

[withdrawn from: *contemplation, matter, embodiment, practice, or particular exemplars*]

. . . and so, *subtlety*, as a withdrawing from the actual, the concrete, the commonplace. . . or, in a more common sense, not knowing what (one) they (might) say / after the appearance of. . . or with numbers, those which have no denomination annexed into them; also a *compendium*, one thing “drawn from others” a smaller quantity containing the virtue or power of a greater [that is to say: the *virtual* or the *potential* of a greater/exterior/other] . . .

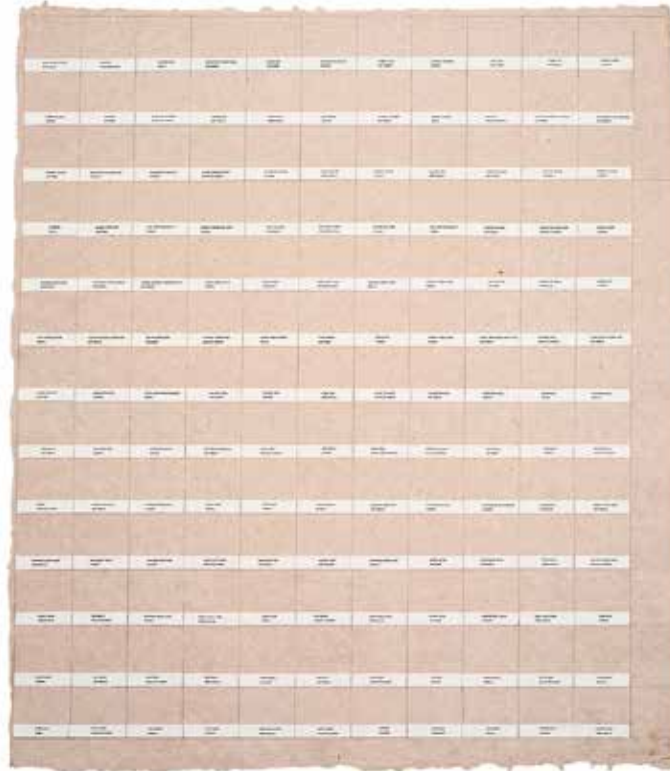
Abstract painting, set into relation with another index, the referential image, a casting of shadows, captured in a trace, an image coming into being whose arrestment secures the index of capture as a claim to truth or to the verisimilitude of what has (after all) passed away, of what we might say continues to pass away, as if what is gone persists in that negative interval; as if the presumed continuity of its passage grounds such an absence as the very promise of recall, and the presumed fidelity of the eye, and of its prosthetic supplements . . . *a constant state of being withdrawn*: in this sense all images are abstract.

*The legible and the visible have common spaces and borders; they overlap in part, and each is embedded in the other to an uncertain degree.*

—Louis Marin



**loveletter**, from the autobiographical color chart series, 2011,  
oil, graphite, labels, on linen, 28" x 24"



**memory drawing** from the autobiographical color chart series, 2010  
labels. graphite on linen paper

In works such as *loveletter* (from the *Autobiographical Color Chart* series, 2011) or *memory drawing* (from the same series, 2009) Haynes paints both color and language, in an itinerary of pigments and color terms that is both sublime and hilarious, an unsettling admixture to the otherwise sedate, even ascetic, sensibilities of abstract painting. But there is another sense of the abstract at play here: one might read the tonalities, hues and intensities, the terminological 'poetics' of the language of color designations almost as one might read music, or code or an encryption, to 'sight read' or conjure an absent image, an image of the possibility of painting, of a potential painting; the painting of the enabling conditions of another painting, one both singular and iterable, imaginary and real.



## undress

For Immanuel Kant the clothing that adorns a statue is of the order of ornament, or of an enframing, something that operates in the register of the *parergon*. The paradox exercised here is that the clothing which is inseparable from the materiality of representation is accorded the curious status of not being a part of the work, of which it is coextensive, but of being other than the work: a non-work. What is the nature of this 'non-work' that occludes the work, occurs in the same place as the artwork? Moreover, how do we attend to this place, such places, today? In Haynes' painting *graphie* (2012, oil on linen) the 'act' of painting is pluralized, modified and subsumed, a 'painting of painting itself,' and so a recursive reflection on the phatic register of the material axis of signification itself.

Emile Benveniste notes that

*... from the fifth century before our era, the Greek language possesses in principle the ability to create, in unlimited ways, derivatives in '-sis' and in '-ma' on any verbal theme.*<sup>19</sup>

so that the suffix '-sis' renders the abstract notion of a process understood in its effectuation, while those words ending in '-ma' designate the object in which the process is incorporated.

. . . the verbal radical of “*poiew*,” *poieo*, ‘I do,’ has followed two paths: “*poihsiz*,” *poiesis*, designates the creation, the fabrication, hence poetry and *poésie*. “*poi-hma*,” *poiema*, is the object of creation, i.e., *poem* or *poème*.

—Marie Rose Logan

So within the notion of *graphein*—the Greek verb meaning ‘to mark,’ the ‘logic, reasoning, thinking’ of the ‘*graph/graphic/graphetic*’, two aspects also appear: *graphesis*, which describes the active, dynamic, disposition of writing/imaging as it actualizes itself within the text/work, without (necessary) recourse to the notion of intentionality; such an abstract movement, cannot be validated without the *grapheme*, the consequent mark; they are, *recto/verso*, the same concept, and so, through the performative exercise of *graphesis* the grapheme is preserved from its ‘theoretical dessication,’ another form of arrestment to secure and stabilize the ‘site’ of the trace or mark (text or image) as an armature for the attachment of sense, meaning, signification, intent, presence. . .



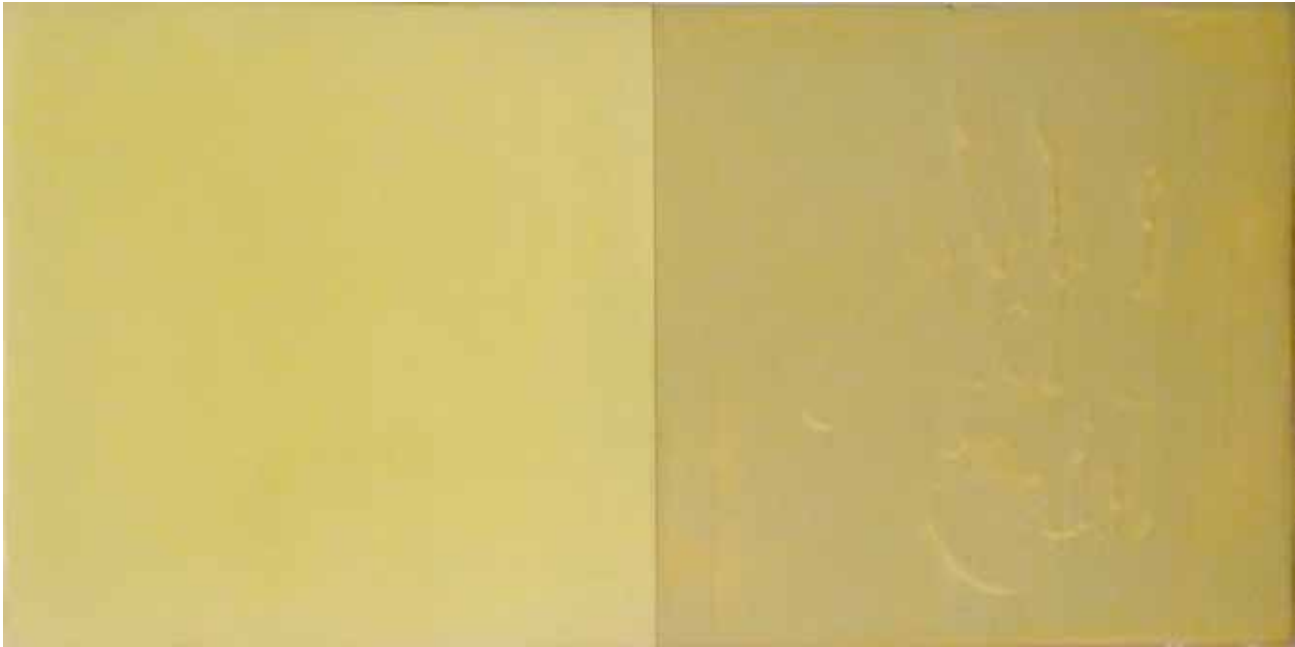
**graphein, 2012, oil on linen, 14" x 16"**

And here, the *gramme* or *grapheme* constitutes a kind of remnant in which the verbliness of the verbum has found a refuge. In other words

*The evidencing of the notion of 'writing' in various manifestations foreign to the order of the voice ("... cinematography, choreography... to be sure, but also pictorial, sculptural, musical 'writing'...<sup>22</sup>) involves the eradication of those reassuring concepts of Being and Presence dear to Metaphysicians, concepts which remain prominently present through the phenomenological endeavor...<sup>23</sup>*

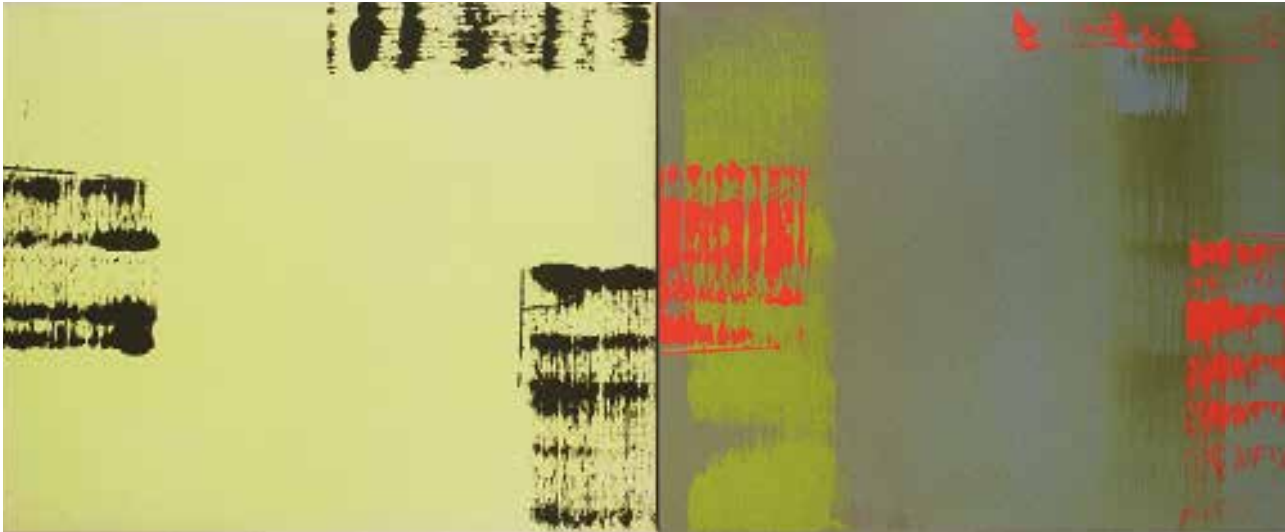
— Jacques Derrida

For Nancy Haynes the 'undressing' of painting sets into play, by revealing, outing, the imbricated paradoxes of the visible and the invisible, in and as they trace the contours of a circulation in relation to language. In *Lascaux painting* (1981) there are multiple registers of displacement and deferral. The two parts of the diptych are the same material, slate; both are occluded, one by a surface of pigment in an oil-based medium, the other by glow in the dark acrylic. Both perform a catachretic operation, 'covering over' or 'sealing' the image, presenting a surface impenetrable by the gaze (but betrayed, in a sense, by language). Of course, one surface only comes to be what it is, one presents itself in an order of evidence ostensibly when one is not looking at it, that is to say, in the dark, in an uncanny presence that is most readily apprehended in peripheral vision, when one is, in fact, *almost* not looking. And the other is 'fully visible' in its hiding of what it is.



**Lascaux painting, 1981** , glow in the dark acrylic on slate , oil on slate (hand print), 8" x 16"

In study for *Rashomon* (1994), another diptych, in phosphorescent acrylic and oil and enamel on linen, the plurality of the visual is alluded to via a sustained recourse to language, to the narrative recounting of an event, from multiple perspectives. But what if all of those accounts were present, simultaneously, not as a referential accounting or reconstruction of what had happened, but in the present tense of what happens in *painting* at any moment? We would have to rethink painting in its visibility and its invisibility at once. There is no better guide to this ubiquitous and uncanny register of the visual/avidual than Nancy Haynes; it is her particular genius that pulls back the veil for all of us, just a bit, just enough to *undress* the image, taking us to its very primordial ground, reintroducing us to its uncanny circulations.



**study for Rashomon, 1994**, diptych, glow in the dark acrylic, oil and enamel on linen, 21" x 51 1/2"



**the painting undressed, 2011**, diptych, oil on linen, 18" x 44"



*. . . there exist what we call images of things, which as it were peeled off from the surfaces of objects, fly this way and that through the air. . . I say therefore that likenesses or thin shapes are sent out from the surfaces of things which we must call as it were their films or bark because the image bears the look and shape of the body from which it came, as it floats in the air.*

—T. Lucretius Carus, *De rerum natura*

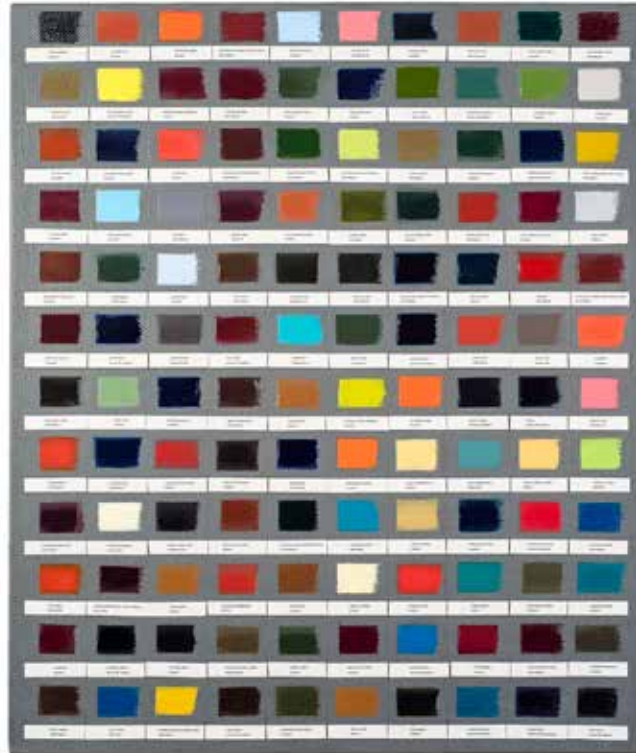
. . . it is only fitting that a text on Nancy Haynes, one which has modestly scratched only a few of the surfaces that she has set into motion, should end on a question pertaining to the uncanny, which is not a question at all . . .



**Vertical-Diptych, c 1974.** oil on wood, slate L shape  
and oil on gessoed canvas, 25" x 12" overall



**discourse, 1992** , oil on wood (glow in the dark acrylic underneath), 21" x 25"



**table of contents (from the...)** 2010, oil, graphite, labels, on linen, 25" x 21"



**Michael's valentine (from the...)** 2010, oil, graphite, labels, on linen, 21" x24"



artist at the ganges, 2010, photo credit: Gillian Walker

*for Nancy Haynes, with greatest admiration, December 2012*

Thomas Zimmer, is a scholar, artist, and curator who lectures and publishes on diverse topics in philosophy, aesthetics, and the history of technology. Thomas Zimmer's artworks have been exhibited worldwide, and he has taught at Brown, NYU, The New School, Transmedia programme/Brussels, TransArt Institute/Linz, and Tyler School of Art/Temple University. He is currently Faculty in Philosophy at the Europäische Universität für Interdisziplinäre Studien/European Graduate School (EUFIS/EGS), Saas-Fee, Switzerland, Associate Professor/ Director of the Graduate Program in Graphic/ Information Design at Central Connecticut State University, and Professor in the Graduate Studies Division and in the Digital + Media Department at RISD. He is also a Doctoral Professor at the Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten | KASK | Academie Ghent, Belgium. Dr. Zimmer holds a PhD in Philosophy and Media Studies, and currently lives in Brooklyn, NY.

## **Nancy Haynes**

Born 1947, Waterbury, Connecticut  
Lives and works in Red Hook, Brooklyn

### **Selected Solo Exhibitions**

- 2013 Regina Rex Gallery, Bushwick, NY  
George Lawson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 "the painting undressed - selections from the  
autobiographical color chart series" 3A Gallery, NY  
George Lawson Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2010 George Lawson Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2009 "dissolution," Elizabeth Harris Gallery, New York, NY
- 2006 Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria
- 2002 Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria
- 2000 "Between Two Appearances," Stark Gallery, New York
- 1998 Galerie von Bartha, Basel, Switzerland  
Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria  
"Monotypes", Galerie Mathias Kampl, Munich, Germany  
Lawing Gallery, Houston, TX
- 1995 "Endgame, Brain Coral," Lawing Gallery, Houston, TX  
"Monotypes", Pamela Auchincloss Gallery, New York, NY
- 1993 John Good Gallery, New York, NY
- 1992 The Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA
- 1991 "The Lacuna of Certainty," The Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA  
John Good Gallery, New York, NY  
Genovese Annex, Boston, MA
- 1990 John Good Gallery, New York, NY  
"Monotypes," Pamela Auchincloss Gallery, New York, NY
- 1989 John Good Gallery, New York, NY



- 1987 Julian Pretto Gallery, New York, NY
- 1986 John Gibson Gallery, New York, NY
- 1985 John Gibson Gallery, New York, NY  
Plus-Kern Gallery, Brussels, Belgium  
Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Holland
- 1984 P.S. 1 Project Room, Long Island City, NY
- 1983 David Bellman Gallery, Toronto, Canada
- 1981 David Bellman Gallery, Toronto, Canada

**Selected Group Exhibitions (since 2001)**

- 2013 Five Myles Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
"sideshow Nation", Sideshow Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2012 "Cool,Calm,Collected", Danese Gallery, N.Y.  
"Letters Not About Love: EJ Hauser, Nancy Haynes and Sarah Peters", Regina Rex Gallery,  
Bushwick, N.Y., curated by Yevgeniya Baras  
"art=text=art: works by contemporary artists," Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University,  
New Brunswick, New Jersey, curated by N. Elizabeth Schlatter with Rachel Nachman  
MIC:CHECK (The:human mic) (occupy), Sideshow Gallery, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- 2011 "Two Colors," Kathleen Cullen, N.Y. and Elizabeth Ivers Gallery, N.Y., curated by  
Clay Hapaz  
"art=text=art: Works by Contemporary Artists", University of Richmond Museums,  
Richmond, Virginia, curated by Elizabeth Schlatter with Rachel Nachman  
"it's all good!! apocalypse now", group exhibition, Sideshow Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2010 "New York – encore selection from gallery artists," George Lawson Gallery,  
San Francisco. CA  
"redi-mix," Kathleen Cullen Fine Arts, NY, curated by James Hyde
- 2009 "Winter Salon," Bjorn Ressler Gallery, NY  
the viewing room, Lesley Heller Gallery, NY
- 2008 Group Exhibition, vday syndikat space, Brooklyn, NY  
the dining room, Lesley Heller Gallery, New York, NY  
"Dimensions in Nature: New Acquisitions, 2006-2008," San Diego Museum of Art,  
San Diego, CA organized by Betti-Sue Hertz and Erica Overskei

**Selected Group Exhibitions (since 2001)**

- 2007 "Written on the Wind: The Flag Project," Rubin Museum, New York  
"Monumental Drawings," Blue Star Contemporary Art Center, San Antonio, TX, curated by Barbara MacAdam
- 2006 "Faith," Real Art Ways, Hartford, Connecticut, curated by James Hyde  
"The Independents," curated by Judith Selkowitz and Rebecca Shea, 499 park avenue, NY
- 2005 "The Mark of Minimalism: Gifts of Work on Paper from Sarah-Ann and Werner Kramarsky," Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, NH  
"Fine Lines from the collection of Wynn Kramarsky," Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA
- 2004 "The Invisible Thread: Buddhist Spirit in Contemporary Art," Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island, N.Y., curated by Robyn Brentano, Olivia Georgia, Roger Lipsky, and Lilly Wei  
"Priority," Art in General Gallery, N.Y., benefit  
"Flag Project," Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, N.Y., curated by Arlene Shechet and Kiki Smith  
"Art for a Landmine Free World," PaceWildenstein Gallery, N.Y., curated by Kiki Smith
- 2002/03 "Drawings of Choice from a New York Collection," Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, IL traveled to: The Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR; Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME; Cincinnati Museum of Art, Cincinnati, OH.
- 2003 "Of Collage: The Artist as Collector, The John A. Schweitzer Collection," Stewart Hall Art Gallery, Pointe-Claire, Quebec, Canada  
"Selections from the Permanent Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, Florida
- 2002 "Made in Brooklyn," S.Cono Pizzeria, Brooklyn, N.Y., curated by Chris Martin and Nellie Appleby  
"Recent Acquisitions," Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas  
"Glow: Aspects of Light in Contemporary American Art," curated by: Frances Colpitt, Artpace, San Antonio, TX, traveled to: The University of Texas at San Antonio Art Gallery, The Jones Center for Contemporary Art, Austin, Texas, University of North Texas Art Gallery, Denton, Texas

2001 "Abstraction and Immanence," Times Square Gallery, Hunter College, New York; curated by Laura Sue Phillips and Vincent Longo  
"Fifteen Years of Painting," Stark Gallery, N.Y.  
"Cinema Studies," Lucas Schoormans Gallery, N.Y., curated by Aruna D'Souza  
"Monochrome/Monochrome?" Florence Lynch Gallery, N.Y., curated by Lilly Wei

#### **Awards**

2001 Francis J. Greenburger  
1995 Pollock- Krasner Foundation  
1990 National Endowment for the Arts  
1987 New York Foundation for the Arts  
National Endowment for the Arts

#### **Selected Teaching and Visiting Artist**

2013 Visiting Lecturer, Hoffberger School of Painting, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD  
2000 Visiting Lecturer, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ  
1994 Visiting Artist, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA  
1992 Lecturer, The Carpenter Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA  
1986-89 Adjunct Lecturer, Hunter College, New York, NY

#### **Selected Public Collections**

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY  
The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
The Hood Museum, Dartmouth, NH  
The Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO  
Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Holland  
The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX  
The Ackland Museum, Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
The Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA  
The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA  
Yale Museum of Art, New Haven, CT  
The San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA  
The UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA  
The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD



**QR for 12-12-12, 3A Gallery**, drawing, graphite on linen paper, 8" x 10"

**3A Gallery**

179 Canal Street, #3A

New York, NY 10013

212.219.7523

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12/12/12 through 1/25/13