

Catalog produced on the occasion of Buoyant Surface Jean Alexander Frater Chicago Artists Coalition July - August 2018

essay by Ionit Behar photos by Nick Albertson

Jean Alexander Frater
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Tannin Lockes, $41 \times 48 \times 8$ in Acrylic, enamel and latex on canvas, torn and rewoven 2018

The Field is Woven by Ionit Behar

Alexander Frater's works are like maps, traced by lines that escape geometry-"fugitives from geometricization," as Deleuze and Guattari said. Rather than constraining difference, repetition and intuition allow Frater to produce difference, whereby multiplying the variables. Frater's surfaces invite for both a contemplative passivity and performative enactment, bolting viewer to the work, as if the encounter were to engender a state of radical flux. The woven surface-made out of teared canvas-is suspended and affixed to the frame, letting gravity do its work, pulling down the weight of the material resembling sagging-aging skin. The gravitational pull holds all things in place, establishing order while at the same time giving us an opportunity to experience irregularity.



Celadon Dew, 48 x 39 x 6 in

Acrylic, enamel and latex on canvas, torn and rewoven





Aulde Glycine, 43 x 43 x 11 in

Alexander Frater uses canvas, a readymade material, to create a grid, which is itself a ready-made format. The canvas is also a grid, ripped from its original weave, only to be woven together again. Everything is revealed about how the works are made; by tearing the canvas, a second color is revealed underneath, producing multiple layers of disclosure. The painting becomes an "anti-painting" and the monochrome becomes an "antimonochrome." It is as if Alexander Frater is telling us "I owe you the truth in painting and I will tell it to you" (Paul Cézanne to Emile Bernard, 1905). The precise course of revealing the truthfulness of painting also reflects the impossibility of it.

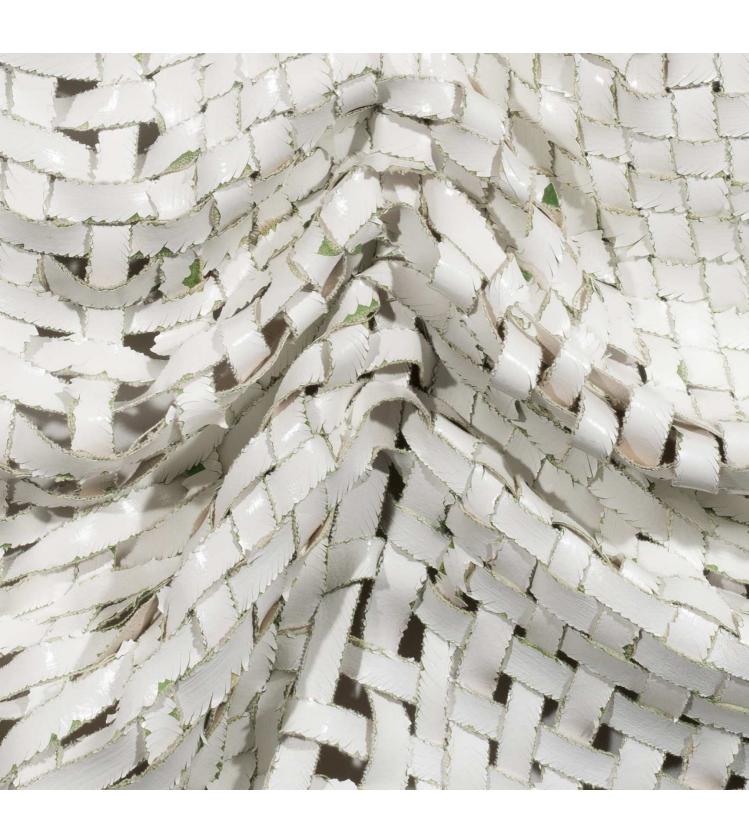


Vanishing Edge, $56 \times 53 \times 4$ in Acrylic, enamel and latex on canvas, torn and rewoven 2018



Lacquered Cloak, 46 x 50 x 12 in

The twisted, contorted, curled, decomposed grids have the features of living things, in a constant state of variation, stating the imbalances or oppositions between regularity and irregularity, precision and imprecision, detail and totality, chaotic and ordered. When looking at a checkerboard, the American philosopher John Dewey observed: "The squares run now vertically, now horizontally, now in one diagonal, now in another." One can observe something similar when looking at a Piet Mondrian painting, or for that matter, when looking at any grid made by the human hand. Just as pure chaos requires organizing principles, a field (either in space or time) requires a frame of reference. I believe Alexander Frater's painting are like "woven fields" endowed with both a dynamic spontaneity and a disposition to control: the most human contradiction.





Grey Garden, $41 \times 43 \times 7$ in Acrylic, enamel and latex on canvas, torn and rewoven 2018



















