

Tauba Auerbach

Yes and Not Yes

Deitch Projects
76 Grand Street, SoHo
Through Nov. 4

In her intriguing New York solo debut, Tauba Auerbach, an artist from San Francisco, is all about codes and letters. Using various linguistic and writing systems, working mostly in ink or acrylic on paper, she achieves what might be called abstraction by other means.

For example, she derives seemingly modernist, if peculiarly arranged configurations by simply diagramming the semaphore alphabet (which yields white fields scattered with small squares divided into red and yellow), or by making patterns based on the binary language of digital technology in which different letters are conveyed by signals that are either on or off (yes or not yes). This lack of ambiguity inspired gridded fields of white and black triangular checks that look more or less gray (and ambiguous) depending on the

size of the grid. They could be collaborations between Victor Vasarely and Brice Marden, with kibitzing from Daniel Buren.

In other pieces, Ms. Auerbach takes a surgical approach, most ambitiously in a three-volume version of the Bible in which all the letters (not the words) have been arranged in alphabetical order and the punctuation marks have been similarly sorted. Its title? "Bbe ehHi lloTy," a scrambling of "The Holy Bible."

A description sheet must be consulted for things to be completely clear. It explains, for example, that a quasi-Constructivist abstraction uses the "interior shapes of the uppercase letters that have enclosed insides." (There are only seven: A, B, D, O, P, Q and R.) This reliance on what are essentially captions is something of a drawback. But Ms. Auerbach, operating in the gap between Conceptual Art, abstraction and graphic art, still manages to give didacticism a good name.

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