



## ABC ART

Like most postmodernists, San Francisco-based artist Tauba Auerbach feels at home in the gray zone. Her conceptual paintings and drawings, executed with a clean meticulousness in stark and bold colors, address language head-on and expose its inherent ambiguities. Although the 25-year-old Stanford graduate only speaks English and a little of her mother's native German, she puts many languages under scrutiny, including Ugaritic, an extinct language from Syria, circa 1300 B.C. Auerbach isolates letters and simple phrases on panels and paper, then obscures their ability to be understood by camouflaging their forms with calligraphic ornamentation (a craft she perfected working as a sign painter for three years) or oversimplifying their silhouettes, rendering them beautiful abstract objects. "I consider my work kind of like a study of semiotics—a self-guided study where I am asking questions about language as a user of language."

Deitch Projects will be hosting Auerbach's first New York solo show, "Yes and Not Yes," in which she will debut 20 new paintings and

drawings. (*How to Spell the Alphabet*, a full-color book designed by the artist, accompanies the exhibition.) In her commitment to ambiguity, Auerbach has a distrust of binaries in general, and part of her new body of work addresses the aptly named digital language: Binary. The eight large drawings are each 50 percent black and 50 percent white to illustrate the absence of gray in binary code. The title of her show exposes a glitch in the matrix and saves us from a world without gray. "In binary code there are zeros and ones, which for a while I was thinking is like 'yes's' and 'no's.' But zero is not really its own thing. It's just the absence of one. It's more accurately described as 'not yes.'" Auerbach admits to being a nerd who goes to the library to study math and science. Of the aim of her new show she says, "I want people to be a little more aware of language and try to challenge it." *"Yes and Not Yes" by Tauba Auerbach will be on display at Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St., (212) 343-7300, New York. Oct. 5–Nov. 4.* ★ Nicole Davis • Artwork by Tauba Auerbach (left: "Uppercase Insides," right: "Lowercase Components")