

JACK HANLEY GALLERY

**ART & DESIGN**

# The New York Times

**Alicia McCarthy Expands Her Illusions in New Work**

By ROBERTA SMITH OCT. 1, 2015



Alicia McCarthy's "Untitled" (2015), a gouache with spray and latex paint on wood panel, is at the Jack Hanley Gallery.

*Credit Courtesy of The Artist and Jack Hanley Gallery*

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Alicia McCarthy has become quite an abstract painter, still using mostly colored pencils. Her art has always been appealing but her latest works are more rigorous than cute. They combine handmade quirks and a personal, slightly visionary geometry with an echoing perceptual subtlety. What you see is what you see until it isn't. Sometimes the illusions amount to gently Op Art-like trompe l'oeil.

There are three kinds of works here, two of them on the slightly funky pieces of found wood that Ms. McCarthy has long favored. The smallest four, painted on the backs of old drawers, are gray-on-gray grids made, it seems, by scraping into wet paint. First you notice that the grids are actually drawn — even the expected gooey buildup bordering each scrape. Then you see that the lines are interwoven, not simply grid-ded, and that two have little fillips of spray paint as if cryptically vandalized.

The four middle-size paintings use found plywood, sometimes in diptychs. They're painted red, gray or blue and are also sparsely vandalized and worn. Their motifs build up from concentric bands of color (more pencil) that form a diamond, pairs of kissing U shapes or a tiled floorlike plane that refuses to recede.

The colors change every chance they get: when the lines intersect (in the U's) or turn a corner (the diamond), when they cross from one panel to the other. The diamond seems folded or refracted. The U's can seem woven.

In the two largest works, Ms. McCarthy takes to canvas and replaces pencils with spray paint, making radiant, loosely woven grids. Never as simple as they first appear, these works breathe in a new way and, again, generously reveal secrets of their own.

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Alicia McCarthy

Jack Hanley Gallery

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Through Oct. 11

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