

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

LAUREL SPARKS
GEOMANTRIA
FEBRUARY 24 – APRIL 6, 2018

Opening Saturday, February 24 from 5-7 PM

PRESS RELEASE

In the new paintings of Laurel Sparks, high modernism meets high camp. Each work's composition is derived from an arcane symbol or ritual that provides the painting an elementary structure in conversation with geometric abstraction. This skeleton is then adorned with a potpourri of stuff: rhinestones, jingle bells, clay trinkets, papier-mâché, rocks, glitter, ash. Straddling the twin poles of order and excess, restraint and flamboyance, the works engage in an alchemical process by which discrete and binary parts are made whole.

The colors, textures, and materials embedded in each geometric zone stand in for cardinal directions, deities, elements, and energies. Practitioners of sigil or chaos magic believe that drawn shapes and lines can influence the material world. Sparks gestures toward this tradition while also finding pleasure in the garish and lighthearted.

The 10 body-sized works that make up *Geomantria* varyingly draw their forms from masonic tracing boards, string figures, sigil magic, glyphs, and geomancy—a form of divination that employs the tossing of stones. Unlike the paintings in Sparks' last exhibition at Kate Werble, *Rubedo*, which felt solid like vessels, these works appear both more capacious and architectural; lighter washes of paint suggest billowing smoke or stained glass-filtered light.

The meanings behind Sparks' works are encrypted, not meant to be decoded but rather dealt with on their own aesthetic terms. Magic is a nonlinear trajectory, and the scrawled sigil, a communication with the unconscious, is more powerful once forgotten. Like a kind of dazzle camouflage, her intent hides in plain sight.

Laurel Sparks (USA b. 1972 in Phoenix, AZ) received her BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and Tufts University in Boston, MA and her MFA from Milton Avery Graduate School of Art at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, NY. Her work has been exhibited at venues including the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York, NY; Barbara Walters Gallery at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY; The Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design, Asheville, NC; Philip and Muriel Berman Museum at Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA; Elizabeth Foundation Gallery, New York, NY; The Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston, MA; CCS Bard Hessel Museum, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA; and Art in General, New York, NY. She was a 2014 Fellow at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop at Elizabeth Foundation, New York, NY and a 2013 Fire Island Artist Resident. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. This is her second solo exhibition at Kate Werble Gallery.