

# The New York Times

Art In Review

## Lauren Luloff: 'Recent Paintings'

By Roberta Smith

Jan. 2, 2014

As a painter, Lauren Luloff excels at the extremes of ideas and touch. Her mongrel conception of her medium — as painting, textile, patchwork collage, punctured surface and abstraction — and her equally confident handling of different materials and techniques, are sometimes more exciting than the results.

Of the collage-paintings in her latest show, the best is “Flame Violet and Golden,” which contrasts dark patterns with an explosion of pink, and was exhibited in a 2012 summer group show at Galerie Lelong in Chelsea, where it knocked me out. Nothing else here quite does that, although most comes close.

Starting with tight, primed muslin, Ms. Luloff applies swaths of patterned fabric that she sometimes finds but usually makes, either by block printing or by drawing with bleach on colored bedsheets. Areas of abstractly worked oil paint are added to some of the spaces between the fabric, as are cuts through the surfaces that may expose stretcher bars or the wire screening behind the muslin.

The range from tight to loose pattern, from pattern to expressive painting, is intriguing in concept, as is the emphasis on a painting as a physical object. But these works are often too arbitrary and random in totality. They lack internal sense, or rigor, especially in the application of the oil paint.

Repeatedly, it is the dark or earthy bleach-drawn patterns and motifs that draw the eye as the freshest, most convincing parts of the paintings, the areas where Ms. Luloff seems most engaged and present.



“Cliff” (2013), a work of oil, bleached bedsheets and dyed fabric on muslin, on display in the Lauren Luloff exhibition at Show Room Gowanus, in Brooklyn.

*Show Room Gowanus  
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Through Sunday*

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