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Art & Design

What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

Art in review, from Times critics.

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Judy Ledgerwood's "Pretty Monster" (2015) at Tracy Williams.
Credit Courtesy of the artist and Tracy Williams, New York

Judy Ledgerwood

By KEN JOHNSON

Working with spontaneous panache, the Chicago artist Judy Ledgerwood paints expansive, boldly colorful grid-based abstractions. An infectious exuberance animates her new canvases in an exhilarating [exhibition at Tracy Williams](#) on the Lower East Side.

The paintings consist mainly of rows of diamond shapes that combine into optically percussive argyle patterns. Enhancing the rhythms, thick and thin dots of paint punctuate the lozenges. In "Mountain," the show's biggest piece at 7½ feet by 12 feet, three horizontal rows of spotted diamonds in many colors fill the viewer's visual field with a strobing fabric of syncopating voluptuousness.

A distinctive feature is how Ms. Ledgerwood shapes her compositions. She leaves white borders around the edges of the canvases, as if the overall designs were tapestries or quilts pinned by the upper corners to white walls. They seem to droop and bow outward, creating paradoxical fusions of actuality and virtuality. Drips of paint falling over the white, lower edges of the canvases further confound the dichotomy of the real and the illusory.

This may sound complicated in theory, but on canvas it's perfectly clear. Painting with the carefree abandon of an improvising jazz musician, Ms. Ledgerwood makes what's hard look easy.

Tracy Williams
55 Hester Street, Lower East Side
Through June 30