

ARTFORUM

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MARSHA COTTRELL

Eleven Rivington | 11 Rivington Street

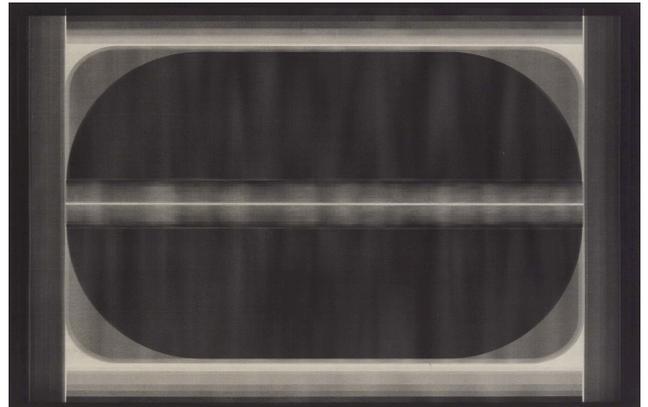
February 27 – April 5

By Zoë Lescaze

Ten diverse black-and-white drawings created with an electrostatic printer make up Marsha Cottrell's *Index 1 (Presence of Nature)*, 1998–2013. A spare, crisply gridded work on typewriter paper hangs near another made on cloudy Mylar. Manipulated while damp, the smudged streaks waft upward like wisps of smoke. The busiest drawing whirls with scattered ovals and staccato dashes, a musical score blown to smithereens. These flurries of stray marks contrast with more solid, linear forms, and it feels as though an indecipherable architectural diagram is disintegrating into the maelstrom. Still others recall astronomical phenomena: solar eclipses, orbiting planets, and their moons. Modestly sized, Cottrell's output pulses to its own enigmatic tempo, a beat born out of careful control and technological chance. The nuanced results, refreshingly, flout photographic reproduction. These are best seen in person.

In the works forming another, particularly cryptic, set of printer drawings, glowing horizontal lines are framed by rounded, overlapping rectangles. It feels as though we are encountering these bands—reminiscent of graphic renderings of audio files, burning horizon lines, and flatlining patients—through a series of monitors or welding helmets. Still others, also composed of overlapping rectangles, run multiple times through the printer, recall rooms seen through several offset windows. These pieces simultaneously invite figural associations while eluding explicit representation.

With a little more editing, the show would be as economic as its best works. One massive piece comprising more than a hundred sheets of letter-size paper interrupted by a single blank circle feels especially gratuitous. The stronger, more complicated pieces operate in a quiet, inquisitive way, vibrating with an absorbing tension. They needle the parameters of what constitutes drawing, prodding the discipline's vulnerable areas as though it were a voodoo doll.



Marsha Cottrell, *Aperture series (5)*, 2014, laser toner on paper (unique), 11 3/4 x 18 1/8".