

ALTMAN SIEGEL

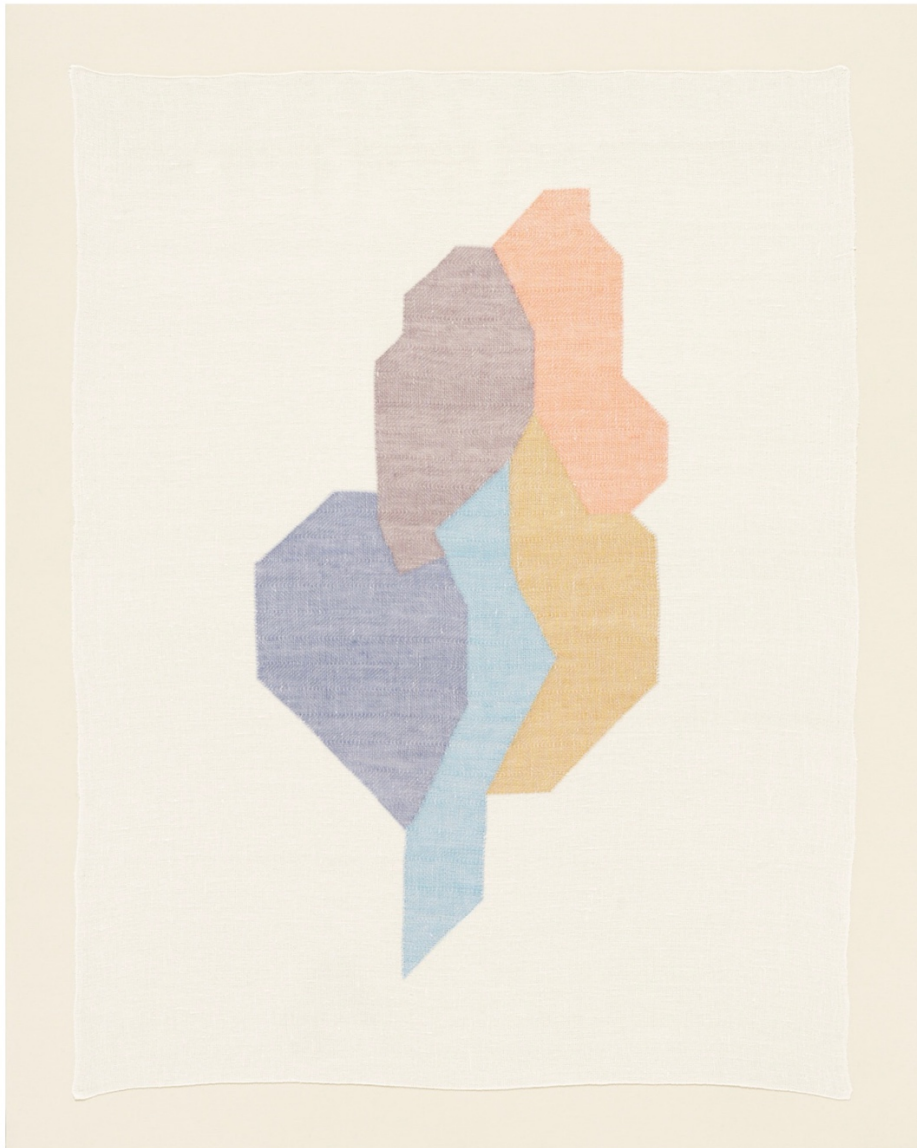
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Sachs, Danica, "Review: Ruth Laskey weaves experimentation into painstakingly produced 'Twill Series,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 11, 2021



Ruth Laskey's "Twill Series (Aggregate 1)," 2021. Hand-woven and hand-dyed linen.
Photo: Ratio 3

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Twill is one of the simplest methods of weaving, its diagonal, gridded pattern formed by passing the weft yarn over and under the warp in an alternating sequence. Widely used in textile production, you've probably seen twill's diagonal lines on your denim jeans. In a quiet exhibition of her minimal artworks, on view at Ratio 3 through Saturday, July 24, San Francisco artist Ruth Laskey presents the results of a productive three years of formal experimentation with weaving in her ongoing body of work, "Twill Series."

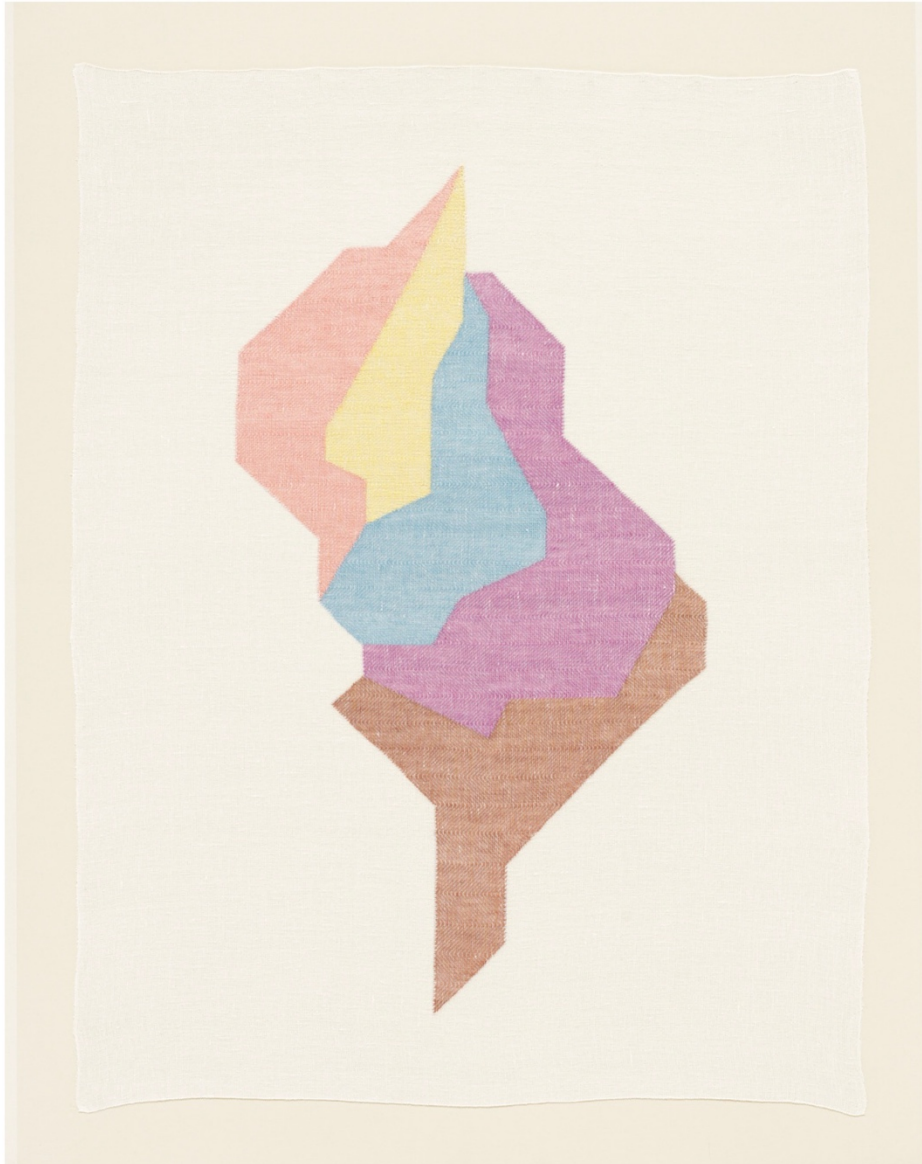
Here, Laskey uses the deceptively simple technique in the creation of artworks that blur distinctions between traditional ways of mark making, like collage, drawing and painting. Divided into three sections chronologically and stylistically, this is an exhibition to move through slowly to closely examine Laskey's process-driven artworks.

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Ruth Laskey's "Twill Series (Aggregate 3)," 2021.

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Laskey employs a painstaking method to construct her images: mixing her dyes by hand, painting individual threads, and then weaving the works on a manually operated floor loom. To produce the gridded colored squares that make up her organic and geometric forms, the artist must account for every move of the shuttle across the loom as the threads shift in color. In essence, Laskey paints with thread, each vibrant form emerging from the natural pale linen as she moves down the loom to create her works. The results are presented modestly, with the full linen weaving mounted to a similarly toned, neutral backing board and framed.

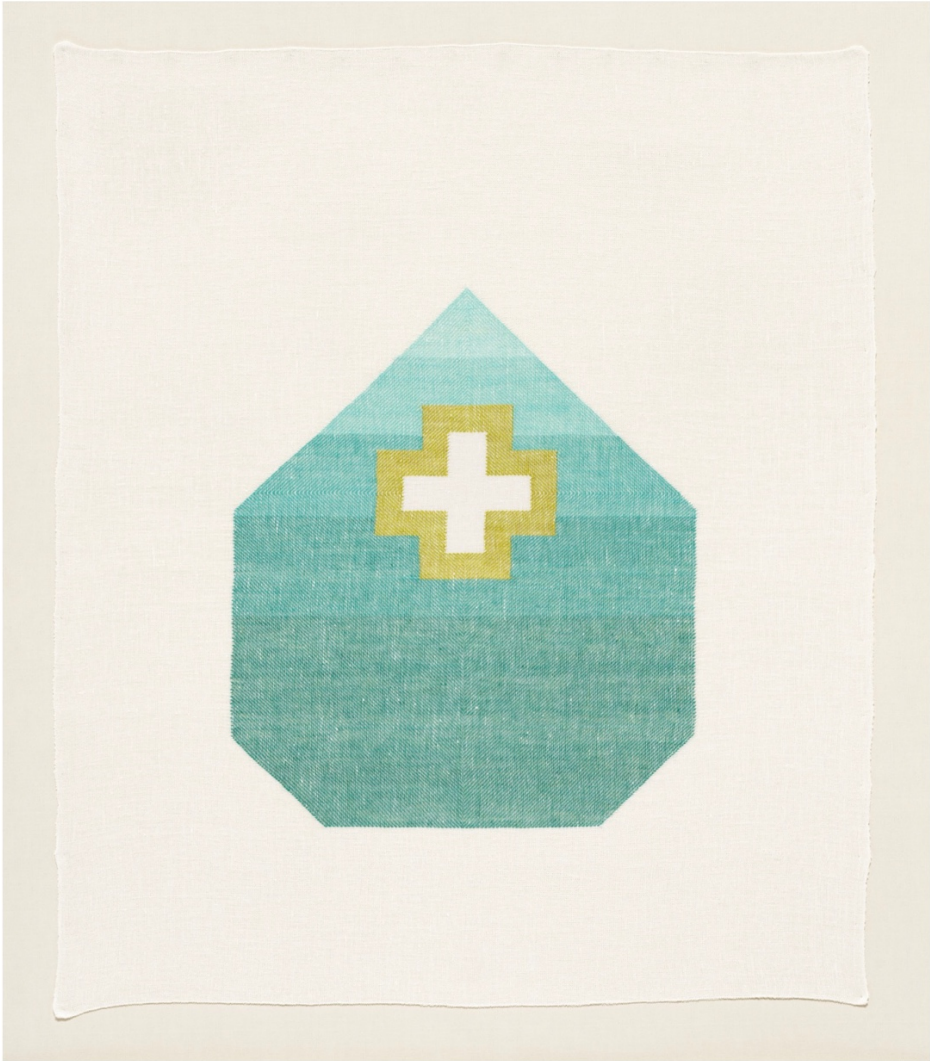
In the first section of the exhibition, Laskey's seven compositions are organic fields of color, pressed up against each other in the center of the linen weaving. All titled "Twill Series (Aggregate)" and dated 2021, the glommed-together masses resemble continents or geographic forms rendered in bright pastels. Visually, these works masquerade as torn paper collaged against a cream background, with the clean lines of each color landmass abutting, not bleeding, into the next.

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Ruth Laskey's "Twill Series (Verdigris/Chartreuse)," 2020.
Photo: Ratio 3

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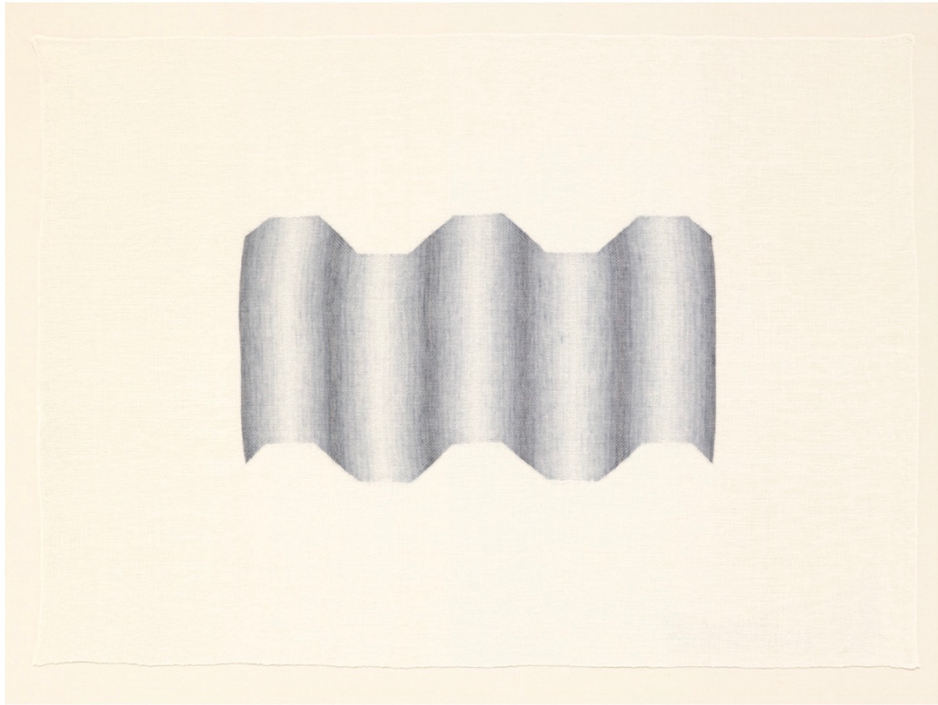
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If we read these first works like collages, then Laskey's weavings in the final gallery, all dated 2019, can more accurately be described as drawings. Here, energetic lines move around the picture plane, punctuated by geometric shapes on the end points.

The artworks in the second gallery are the strongest in the exhibition. In the nine pieces here, Laskey's forms are geometric shapes resembling vessels or urns. Coming up close to look at one of these works, like 2020's "Twill Series (Verdigris/Chartreuse)," you can see the blue-green dyed threads gradually get darker moving from top to bottom. Here is the artist at her most meticulous, carefully planning the movement of the shuttle on the loom to produce the gradient effect.



Ruth Laskey's "Twill Series (Blue Gray)," 2010.

Photo: Ratio 3

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Laskey's earlier similar artworks with color gradients, like 2010's "Twill Series (Blue Gray)," have softer lines and play with optics and perception along the lines of artists such as Robert Irwin. These newer works, however, with their harder edges and more recognizable forms, have the immediacy of Richard Tuttle's painted shaped canvases, merging medium with substrate, figure with ground.

Variouly stripping media of the inherent dimensionality of paint on canvas, or even graphite on paper, Laskey's creations, as shown in these works, are anything but flat. The gradations in color, fastidiously applied by hand to the individual threads and deftly entwined at the loom, add depth and volume to these geometric forms and lines in her compositions.

"Ruth Laskey": Viewings by appointment noon-5 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays. Through July 24.
Ratio 3, 2831A Mission St., S.F. 415-821-3371. ratio3.org