

HERMINE FORD

Toward the Beginning

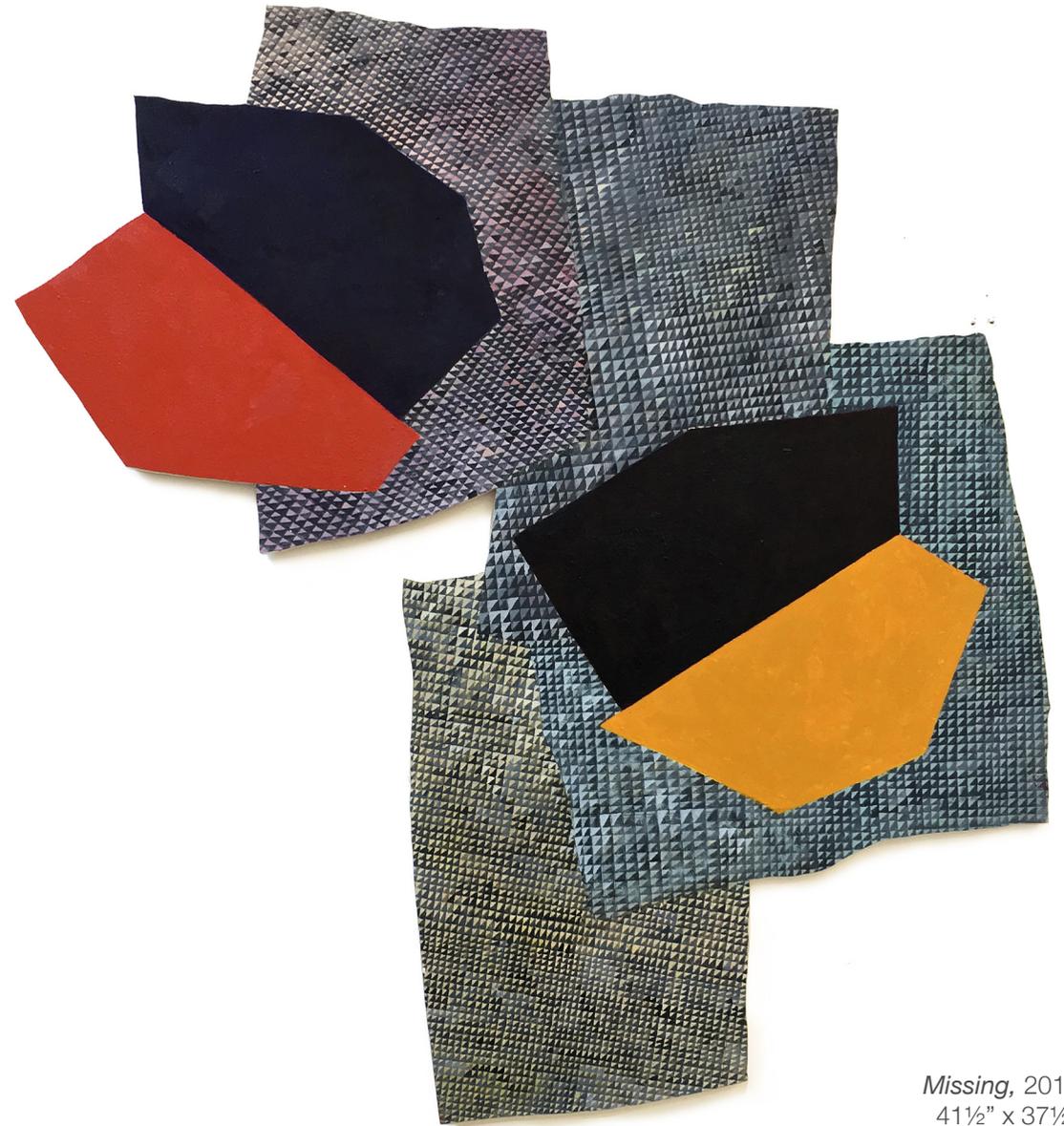


The New York Studio School
8 East 8th Street, NYC
October 21st – December 1st, 2019

TRY TO PRAISE THE MUTILATED WORLD

Try to praise the mutilated world.
Remember June's long days,
and wild strawberries, drops of rosé wine.
The nettles that methodically overgrow
the abandoned homesteads of exiles.
You must praise the mutilated world.
You watched the stylish yachts and ships;
one of them had a long trip ahead of it,
while salty oblivion awaited others.
You've seen the refugees going nowhere,
you've heard the executioners sing joyfully.
You should praise the mutilated world.
Remember the moments when we were together
in a white room and the curtain fluttered.
Return in thought to the concert where music flared.
You gathered acorns in the park in autumn
and leaves eddied over the earth's scars.
Praise the mutilated world
and the gray feather a thrush lost,
and the gentle light that strays and vanishes
and returns.

Adam Zagajewski

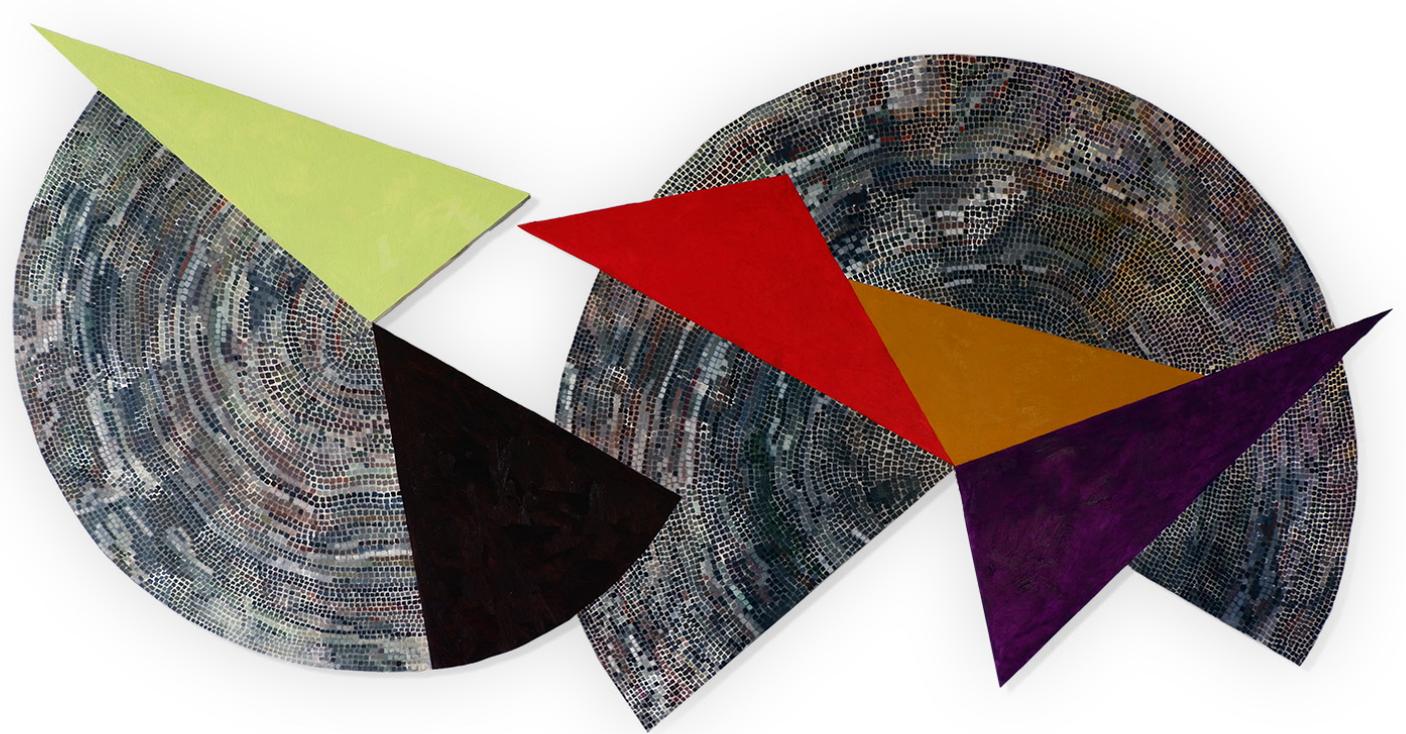


Missing, 2018
41½" x 37½"

A NOTE

One view of a fragment is that, through analysis of what's there, the lost whole can be extrapolated; another view is that the fragment contains in itself the spirit of the whole and requires only our attention to become a fully realized event of its own. The first of course works like a puzzle (reconstruction of Etruscan pottery for example) and belongs essentially to archeology. The second belongs to art, and to understand it we have only to read a scrap of Alkman (since no complete poems exist), or to listen to the first three notes of a solo by Ben Webster, where what is there is all there, present in the tone at every point, or to look at the paintings of Hermine Ford...

William Benton



Toward the Beginning, 2019
45" x 75"

3 WAYS OF LOOKING AT HERMINE FORD'S PAINTING

We are a part which has to imitate the whole

– Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*

1. I write these words in the sunlight of Athens on a modest terrace, with potted plants and a canvas curtain flapping in the breeze. Hermine, I am thinking about your paintings as carriers, messenger birds that circle the citadel of an ancient city. The crisp triangle/star shape extends outward to eternity—and also brings my attention closer to the dense, mosaic-like ground. The paintings are eloquent in their advice for engaging with a material world: look up at the sky, look down to the ground. Oil paint can signify so much, sometimes it makes me crazy: A bird's wing in flight; the intelligent pattern raindrops makes on a window. Did you know there are magpies in the Agora and a turtle that moves backward toward the beginning? Photographs may prove facts, but only paintings can justify reality.
2. Can paintings reveal Time the way a city's built environment can? Pagan marble, Byzantine cement, and 20th century brick, overlay and re-combine in the Pláka neighborhood in Athens. In New York City the mixture is somewhat more profane, and needless to say much younger. But the sidewalks of Tribeca (named for a triangle) carry a fair number of ghosts, of this I'm sure. There is always something devotional to me about pattern making, and pattern breaking. The work is well hidden within the form: the careful layering of cut wood, muslin, pencil, ink, and oil. Seen from another angle, I see these eccentric forms as plans for a sacred edifice, a bird's eye view of rooms that lead into each other and open up onto gardens, courts, hallways, and secret chambers.
3. Philip Guston was right when he said "painting is a clock that sees each end of the street as the edge of the world." The edge and the center turn towards each other; your painting rotates on its own crystal. The geometric shawls worn by Piero della Francesca's saints (in shades of maroon, ochre, indigo, deep red) find their way into the paintings, perhaps without you knowing it. These color forms are like toys, but are also key components of the work—what gives each painting a subtle shift in energy and personality. The titles of the paintings span a lifetime, from nursery rhyme ("Liar, Liar") to cosmic apparatus (*Moon Dial*). I want to wind the clock back and return to the Agora with the magpie and the turtle. Can painting provide a way to move through this sludge of minutes into hours? As always, the slowest wins the race, and paintings keep growing like grass at the ruin's edge.

Nora Griffin

Moon Dial, 2019
60" x 36"



Front Page:

Hats Off, 2018

51" x 33½"

(Photo: Jason Mandela)

Page 2:

"Try to Praise the Mutilated World," by Adam Zagajewsky (Reprinted with permission from the author)

Page 3:

Missing, 2018

41½" x 37½"

(Photo: Jason Mandela)

Page 4:

"A Note" by William Benton (Reprinted from "Hermine Ford: Two Paintings," Norte Maar, Brooklyn, 2009)

Pages 4-5:

Toward the Beginning, 2019

45" x 75"

Page 6:

"3 Ways of Looking at Hermine Ford's Painting" by Nora Griffin, 2019

Page 7:

Moon Dial, 2019

60" x 36"

This page:

Untitled (385-19), 2019

47" x 22½"



All works are oil and graphite on canvas on ¾" deep laminate board.

I wish to thank Jason Andrew, William Benton, Jeri Coppola, Nora Griffin, Jason Mandela, Robert Moskowitz, Graham Nickson, Souhad Rafey, Rachel Rickert, Amanda Trager, and Adam Zagajewsky