





Artist-in-Residence
Spring 2014

RUTH ROOT

Paintings

April 1 – May 4, 2014

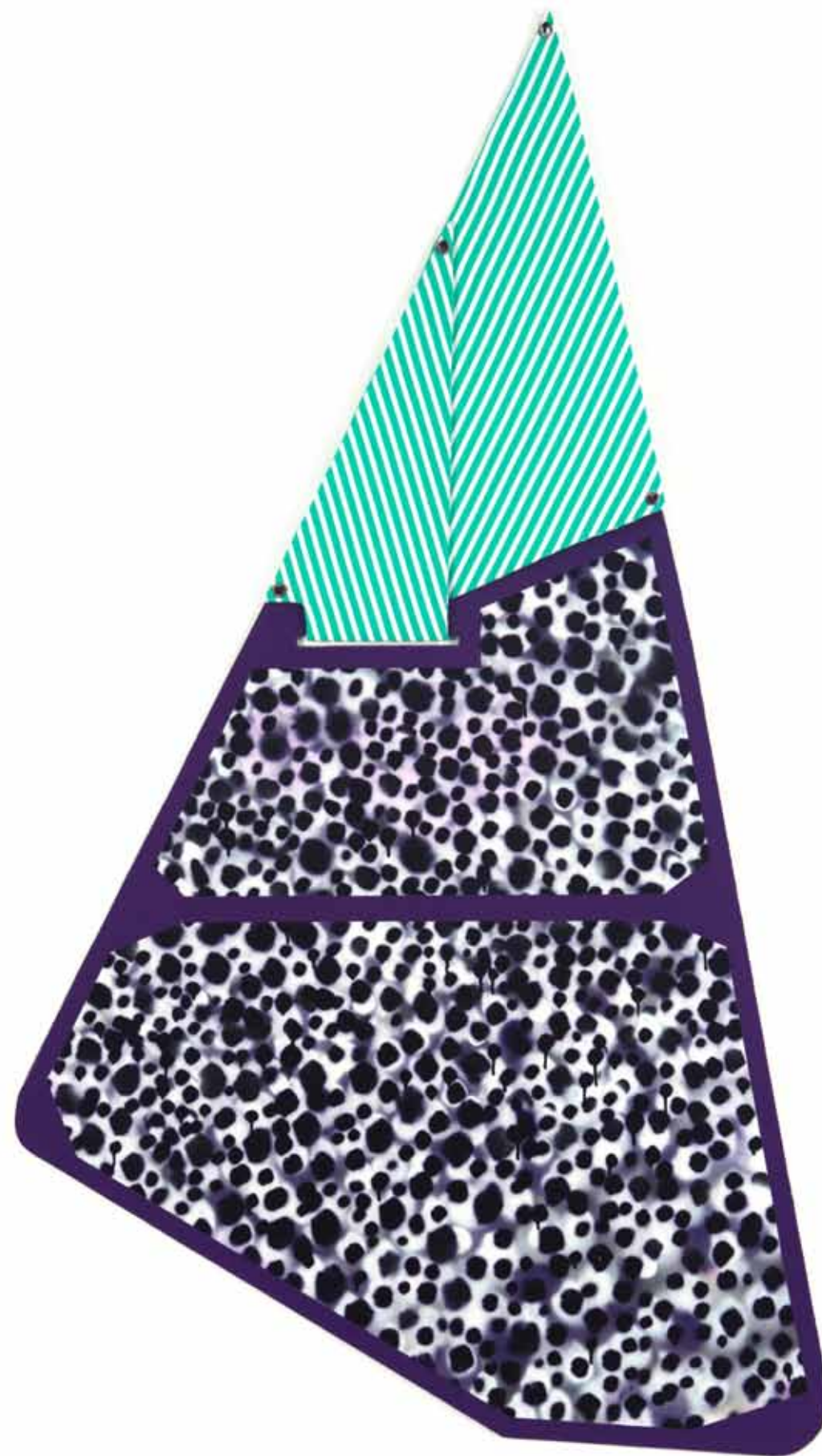
Jaffe-Friede Gallery

Hopkins Center for the Arts

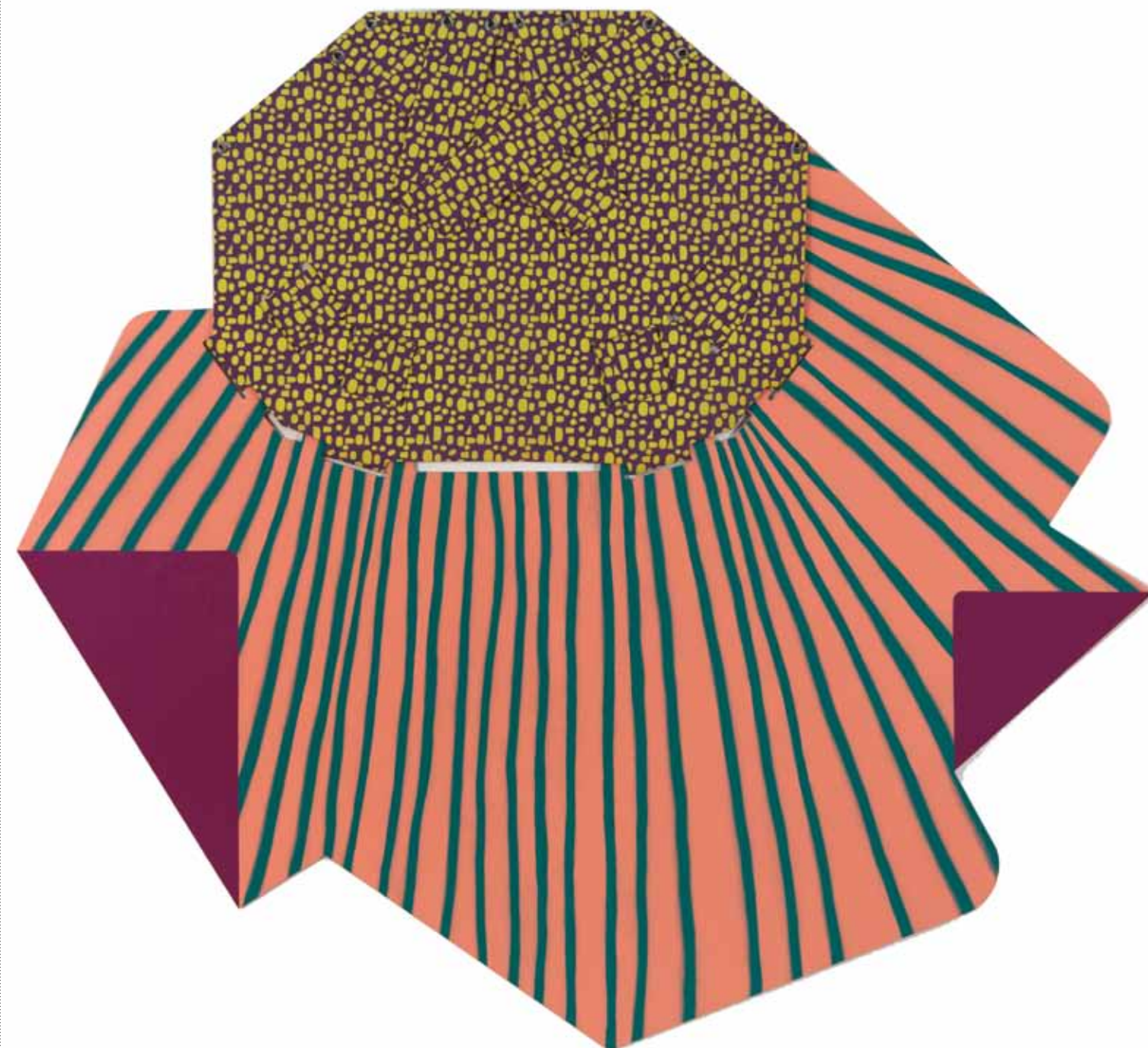
Dartmouth College

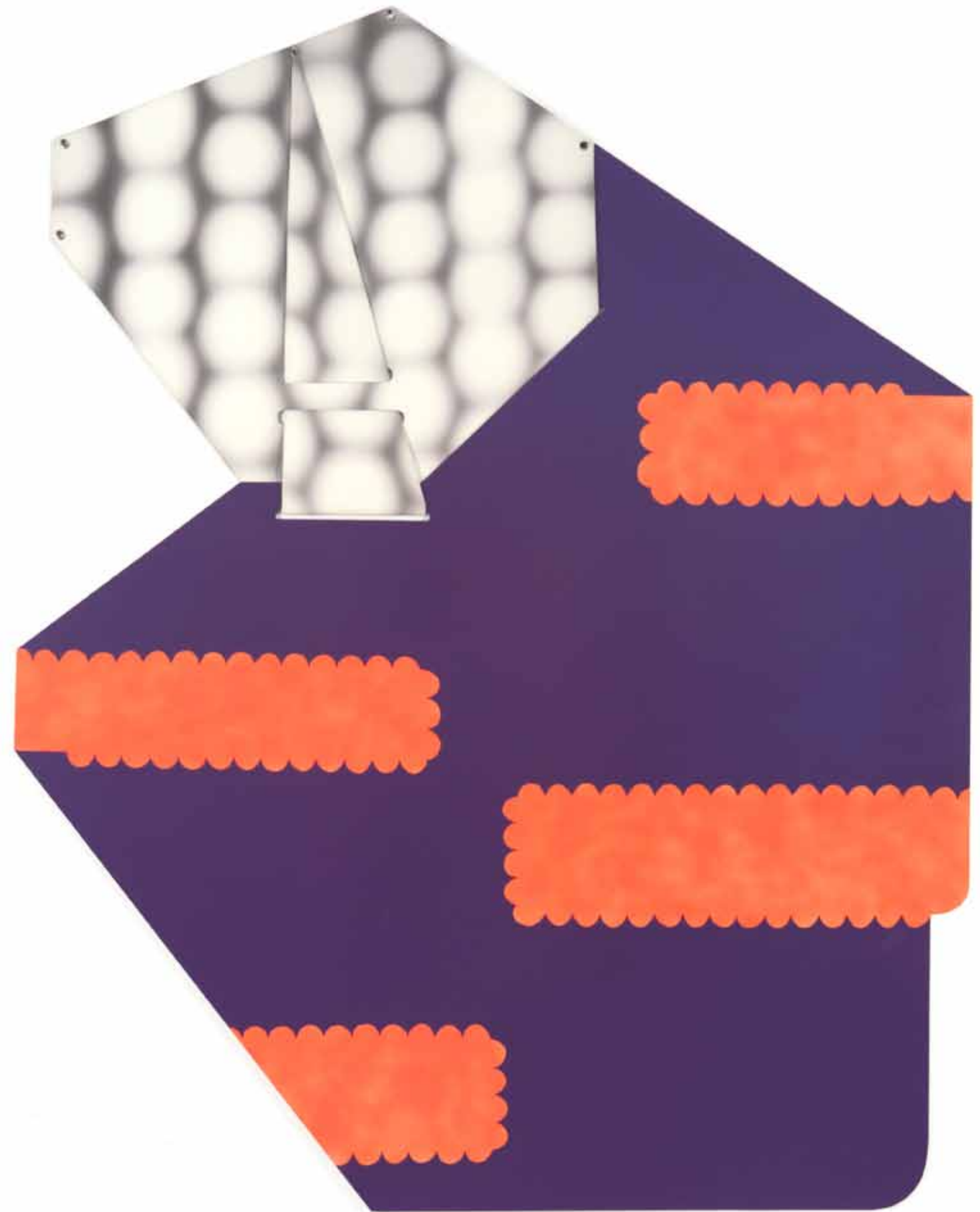
This exhibition is made possible by
the generous support of the
Nathan W. Pearson '32 and Sons Fund

Untitled, 2014, fabric, plexiglass, enamel paint, spray paint, 39 x 69 inches



Untitled, 2014, fabric, plexiglass, enamel paint, spray paint, 85 x 82 inches





Untitled, 2014, fabric, plexiglass, enamel paint, spray paint, 70 x 88 inches

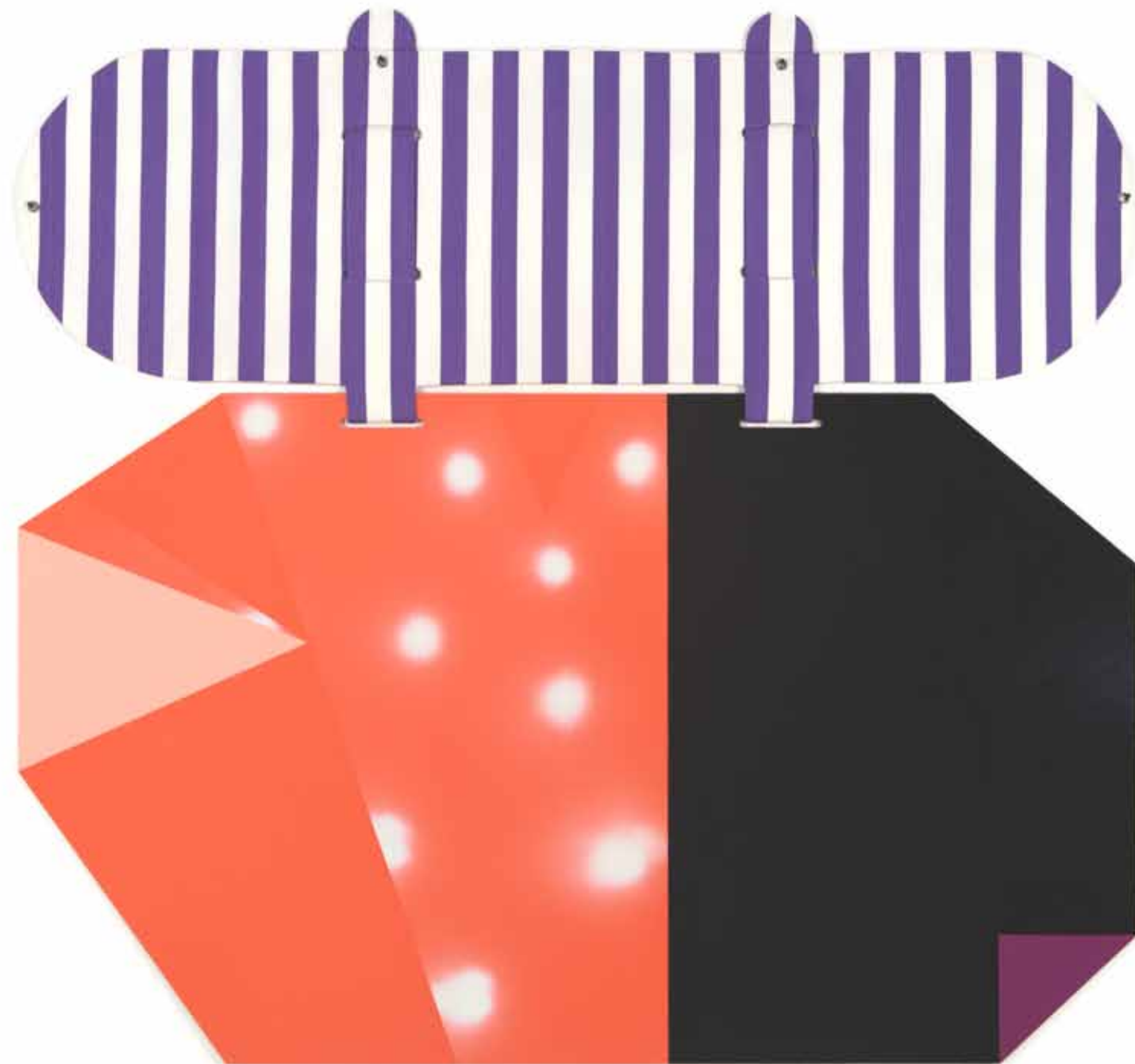
Untitled, 2014, fabric, plexiglass, enamel paint, spray paint, 60 X 75 inches



Untitled, 2014, fabric, plexiglass, enamel paint, spray paint, 55 x 101 inches



Untitled, 2014, fabric, plexiglass, enamel paint, spray paint, 67 x 64 inches



Untitled, 2014, fabric, plexiglass, enamel paint, spray paint, 74 X 91 inches





Ruth Root: Let's Talk About Many Things

By Nora Griffin

1. Abstract Attachments

Ruth Root's seven new paintings on view at Dartmouth College's Jaffe-Friede Gallery break down abstract painting to its essential components: color, form, material, and attachment. The paintings (all Untitled, 2014) are conjoined as a two-part system with shaped fabric parts that sit atop each Plexiglas panel, and are secured to the wall with grommets. The Plexiglas is the larger of the two pieces, and is connected to the fabric by a looping system that is unique to each work, allowing the paintings to sit flush against the wall. The reversal here of fabric being the "stronger" of the two materials becomes a visually alluring tease for contemplating the paintings. The fabric retains its taut shape with a filling of buckram, leather, and fusible muslin. The sewing work is all invisible, as seamless as the attachment system, and the fabric radiates a tactile softness against the shiny enamel and spray-paint coated surface of the plastic panels. The compatibility between the fabric and the Plexi is more obvious in some works, in which the fabric resembles an empty covering that could ostensibly contain the painted panel. In certain paintings the folds in the fabric become visually exciting accessories, calling attention to the optics of thin diagonal stripes, or starburst speckle patterns. The paintings call to mind a diverse array of non-art things: the strange sensuousness of packaging, a belt-loop in a dress, the vibrant colors of a jungle gym.

Since 2001 Root has worked exclusively with geometric blocks of color on shaped aluminum panels, installed with an invisible attachment device that creates the illusion of a merger between painting and wall. The paintings command a graphic authority based on this hanging device and the rigorous precision of the color block system. With this new body of work, Root has turned her hanging system on its head, making it full-frontally visible and as alluring as eye-candy. Thus, the lively hybrid is born when an artist asks a little bit more of her given form, and pushes through the intimidation of her own canon's authority.

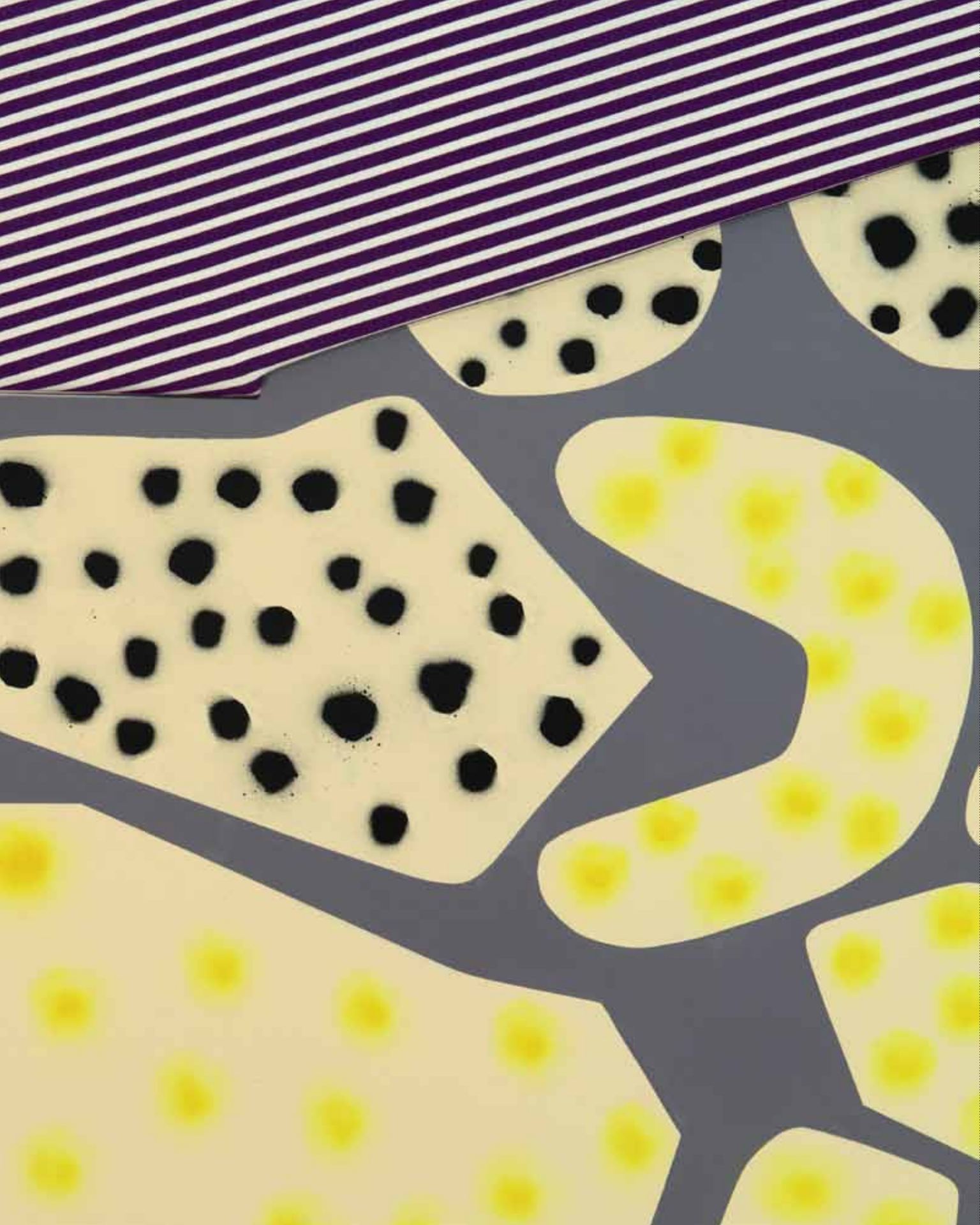


2. When the Rectangle is Not Enough

The flatness of the supports that Root has used over the years (paper, aluminum, and now Plexiglass) and her signature crisply curved edges, gives her art a mutable quality, like a Lego set that can be reconstructed and built anew each time. Root's aluminum paintings are predicated on the tension between the cut-out contours of the panel's shape and the hard-edged color segments. These paintings read as coded signs for "painting," the labor of their construction fitted like a glove into their formal design. In contrast, the Dartmouth paintings feel lighter, less burdened by the 1:1 ration of support to surface. In many ways Root's new paintings evoke another era's excitement about the limits of what constitutes a "painting" and how the support/surface coupling can be re-invigorated. In the 1960s and '70s abstract painting moved off the traditional rectilinear stretcher bar. Notable examples include Ron Gorchov's shield-shaped stretchers resembling a ship's round and sturdy armature, perfectly aligned with the lyricism of his abstract imagery. Richard Tuttle's 1967 series of shaped and dyed canvases, directly nailed into the wall called attention to the elegant material fact of canvas sans paint. For these artists, Root included, the definition of a painting's "support" extends to the wall and space of the room, granting the work an unbridled sense of worldliness.

3. The Eyeball and the Cigarette

The fabric hanging device endows each painting with it's own unique subjectivity, and the two hang together neatly, like an article of haute couture custom-fit for a lucky model. The generous and playful quality of this new body of work connects back to Root's late 1990s series that dropped a pinch of representation into abstraction with delicately rendered eyes and smoking cigarettes peering out from blocks of color. The life-sized eyes could read as either a body trapped inside the painting, or a conscious color that looks back at you. Root's painted eyes could also be viewed as a tribute to Philip Guston's late 1970s paintings that feature anxiety eyeballs floating amid the ship wreckage of a late night studio. There's also a dash of the Pop surrealism of Peter Saul and Jim Nutt. An early visual reference for Root is Alexander Liberman's classic book *The Artist in His Studio* (1960), illustrated with photographs of Modern painters with requisite dangling cigarettes. As seriocomic as the eyes, the cigarettes in Root's paintings are a stand-in for the artist's passion and weakness: the romance of the mid-20th century when the "art world" was simply the "artist's world."



4. Root's Color Wheel

Root has her own version of the color wheel that informs her favored pairings of tertiary and secondary colors. It's clear that she has fought hard for her color mixes, and along with the shapes of her panels, there is a signature quality to her choices. Color is also another way for the artist to negotiate a relationship between the art object and the space around it. Many of Root's aluminum paintings contain rounded white blocks on their edges as a means to confuse the separation between painting and wall. The sharp contrasts between beige, lavender, and yellow feel distinctly urban, like a freshly painted New York City subway station. The Dartmouth paintings have an even greater emphasis on hot colors like bright violet, pink, and orange, undercut with areas of teal, navy, black, and grey. Color here is a vehicle for a breed of pleasure that is rooted in culture. Her new paintings evidence this more explicitly than previous work. The 1970s, the decade of the artist's childhood, is present in the radical brightness, groovy cloud-shaped curves, and quasi-trippy patterns. The absence of blue from Root's color wheel is also interesting to note. Perhaps the paintings' world is one in which the blues have been forever banished.

5. Serious Fun

Can a painting be fun without falling into the trap of cute and quirky? The energy in Root's work borders on wacky, without being screamingly audacious. The modernity of her paintings expresses itself in their mobility — a knack for fitting-in to any party. They would do well in the deliciously garish interiors of the children's television show *Pee-wee's Playhouse* (1986–90), and just as equally command attention in a white cube gallery. There is a wandering, look-around quality that feels fast, but is based on visual experience that exists outside of digital technology and the Internet. The new work is keyed-in to the history of display and the beauty that formalist abstraction can provide, but it also undercuts itself with its own irregularities: the mismatched scale of fabric to plastic, the soft and hard edges, and flat/thing quality of the work. It's clear that Ruth Root has the seriousness of play in mind as she tinkers with her chosen materials to construct an abstract painting that has never been seen before.



1990
Brown University, BA, Art-Semiotics



1993
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago,
MFA, Painting



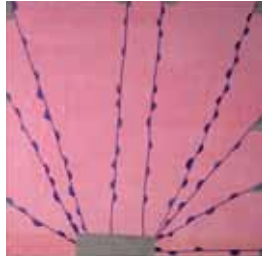
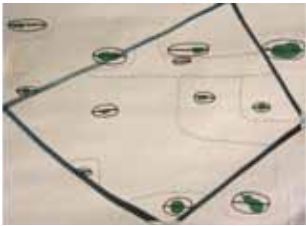
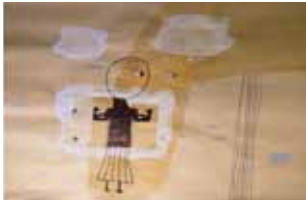
1997
**Ruth Root, Paintings of Migraine
Headaches**, Wesleyan College, Macon, GA



1994
Skowhegan School of Painting
and Sculpture



1995
The Death of the Death of Painting,
Curated by Kenny Schachter, New York, NY
Group show



1997
Vague Pop, Curated by Giovanni Garcia-
Fenech, View room, New York, NY
Group show



1998
Home and Away, Curated by Kirsty Bell,
Gavin Brown's Enterprise, Corp.,
New York, NY
Group show



1995
Eat or Be Eaten/ Painting, Not Painting,
Anderson Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Group show



1998
Sassy Nuggets, Andrew Kreps Gallery,
New York, NY
Group show



1999
Free Coke, Greene Naftali Gallery,
New York, NY
Group show



1999
Ruth Root, Andrew Kreps Gallery, NY



1996
National
Endowment for
the Arts, Mid-
Atlantic Grant
in Painting

1996
New York
Foundation for the
Arts Fellowship
in Painting



1999
Pierogi Press: Cover, Silkscreen



2000
Ruth Root, Galleria Franco Noero,
Torino, Italy



2000
Ruth Root, Nylon Gallery, London, England



2001
The Approximative, Galerie Ghislaine
Hussenot, Paris, France
Group show



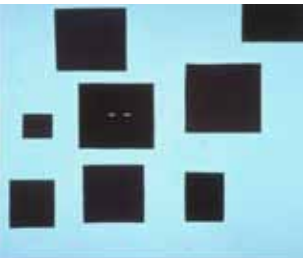
2001
Painting show, Curated by Laura Owens,
Chicago Project Room, Los Angeles, CA



2000
**Greater New York, Duplex solo
installation**, Curated by Klaus
Biesenbach and Laura Hoptman, MOMA/
PS1, LIC, NY,
Group show



2001
Ruth Root, Andrew Kreps Gallery, NYC



2003
Visiting Artist at Tamarind Institute of
Lithography





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2003
Ruth Root, Andrew Kreps Gallery, NYC

2004
City Maps, ArtPace, San Antonio, TX
Group show

2004
Marta Cervera Gallery,
Madrid, Spain



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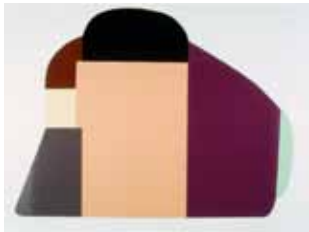
2003
Yaddo Artist Residency

2003
Ruth Root, "Statements," Art Basel,
Miami

2003
Permanent Collection On View,
Los Angeles County Museum of Art,
Los Angeles, CA

2003
**Greetings from New York: A Painting
Show**, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
Salzburg, Austria

2005
Ruth Root, Galerie Nikolaus Ruzicka,
Salzburg, Austria



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2003
**Inheriting Matisse: The Decorative
Contour in Contemporary Art**,
Curated by Michelle Grabner, Rocket
Gallery, London, England
Group show

2006
Untitled (for H.C. Westermann), The
Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, HI
Group show

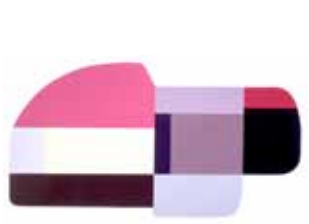
2006
Bergdorf Goodman windows, curated by
Laura Hoptman



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2004
Ruth Root, Maureen Paley Interim Art,
London

2007
**Don't Look. Contemporary Drawings
from an Alumnais Collection Martina
Yamin, Class of 1958**, Davis Museum at
Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA
Group show



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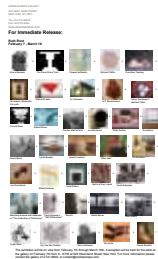
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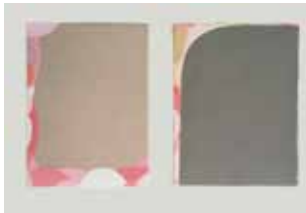


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2007
The Painting Show-Slipping Abstraction,
Mead Gallery, Coventry, England

2008
Take Me There Show Me The Way,
Haunch of Venison, New York, NY
Group show



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2008
David Reed Studio, New York, NY

2008
Unique Act, Hugh Lane Museum,
Dublin, Ireland
Group show

2008
Ruth Root, Marta Cervera Gallery,
Madrid, Spain

2008
The Indiscipline of Painting,
International Abstraction from the
1960s to Now,
Tate St Ives, Cornwall, England

2009
Trail Blazers in the 21st Century,
The David and Ruth Robinson Eisenberg
Gallery, New Brunswick, NJ
Group show

2009
Ruth Root, Maureen Paley Gallery,
London, England



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2008
Ruth Root, Gallery Minmin, Japan

2009
Ruth Root, Galerie Nikolaus Ruzicska,
Salzburg, Austria



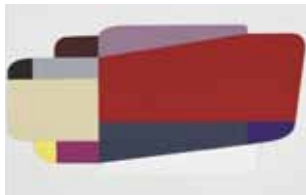
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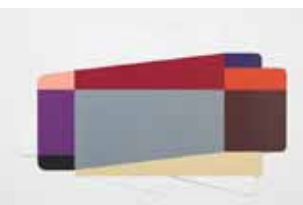
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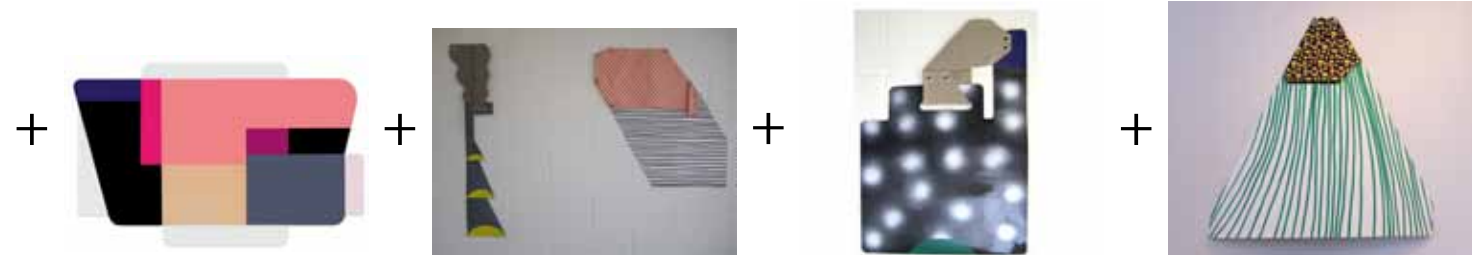


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2008
Ruth Root, Andrew Kreps Gallery, NYC



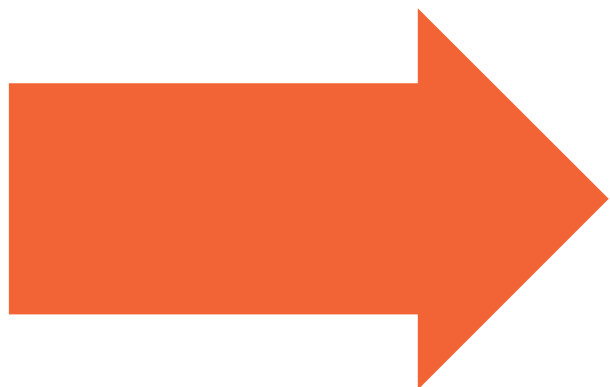
2011
The Suburban, Chicago, Illinois

2012
TO THE VENETIANS II: Chris Martin, Matt Rich and Ruth Root, cocurated by Dennis Congdon and Carrie Moyer, RISD Painting Department, Providence, Rhode Island
Group show



2013
The Cat Show, Curated by Rhonda Lieberman, White Columns, NY, NY
Group show

2014
The Dartmouth Experiment



THANK YOU:



Lin Bo



Lindsay Hand



Nicholas Butterworth



Jason Rosenberg



Sarah Macfadden



Rhonda Lieberman



James Root
Butterworth



Sabrina Yegela



Arnold Root



Meg Hoberman



Jerry Auten



Enrico Riley



Nora Griffin



Laura Owens



Mona Root



Will Bryant



Liz Deschenes



Miranda Lichtenstein



Juliana Ellman



Studio Art Exhibition Program

Gerald Auten, Director, *Senior Lecturer in Studio Art*
HB 6081 Dartmouth College
Hanover, New Hampshire 03755
(603) 646-3651

Virginia Beahan, *Senior Lecturer in Studio Art*
Mary-Thérèse Braun, Department Administrator
Jennifer Caine, *Senior Lecturer in Studio Art*
Brenda Garand, *Professor of Studio Art*
Patricia Green, *Administrative Assistant*
Louise Hamlin, *George Frederick Jewett Professor of Studio Art*
Karolina Kawiaka, *Senior Lecturer in Studio Art*
John Kemp Lee, *Adjunct Assistant Professor of Studio Art*
Brian Miller, *Senior Lecturer in Studio Art*
Aaron Panitz, *Studio Technician*
Soo Sunny Park, *Associate Professor of Studio Art*
Colleen Randall, *Professor of Studio Art*
Enrico Riley, *Associate Professor of Studio Art*
Esmé Thompson, *Professor of Studio Art and Chair of Studio Art*
John D. Wilson, *Senior Lecturer in Studio Art*

Gallery Hours

Tuesday – Saturday 12:30 – 10:00 pm, Sunday 12:30 – 5:30 pm
Closed Mondays and holidays

Catalog

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