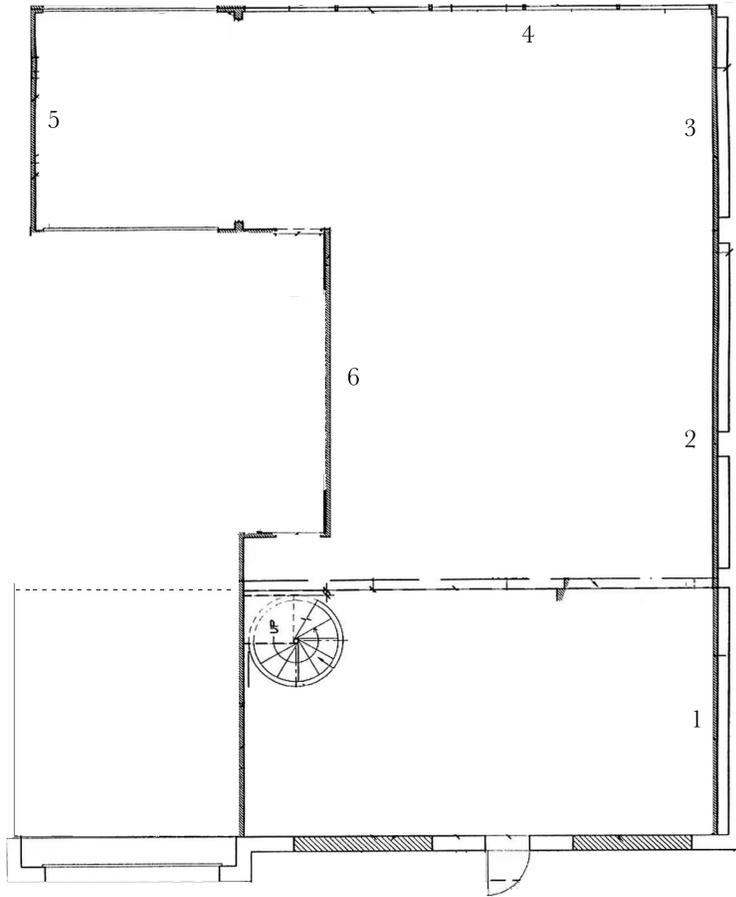


WHITE FLAG PROJECTS

N. Dash

September 21 – November 9, 2013



1- *Untitled*, 2013

Adobe, jute, linen, twine, gesso, wood support
92 x 82 inches

2- *Untitled*, 2013

Adobe, jute, linen, oil, pigment
136 x 27 inches

3- *Untitled*, 2013

Adobe, pigment, acrylic, linen, jute, wood support
99 x 60 inches

4- *Untitled*, 2013

Pigment, acrylic medium, linen, adobe, jute, wood support
57 x 163 inches

5- *Untitled*, 2013

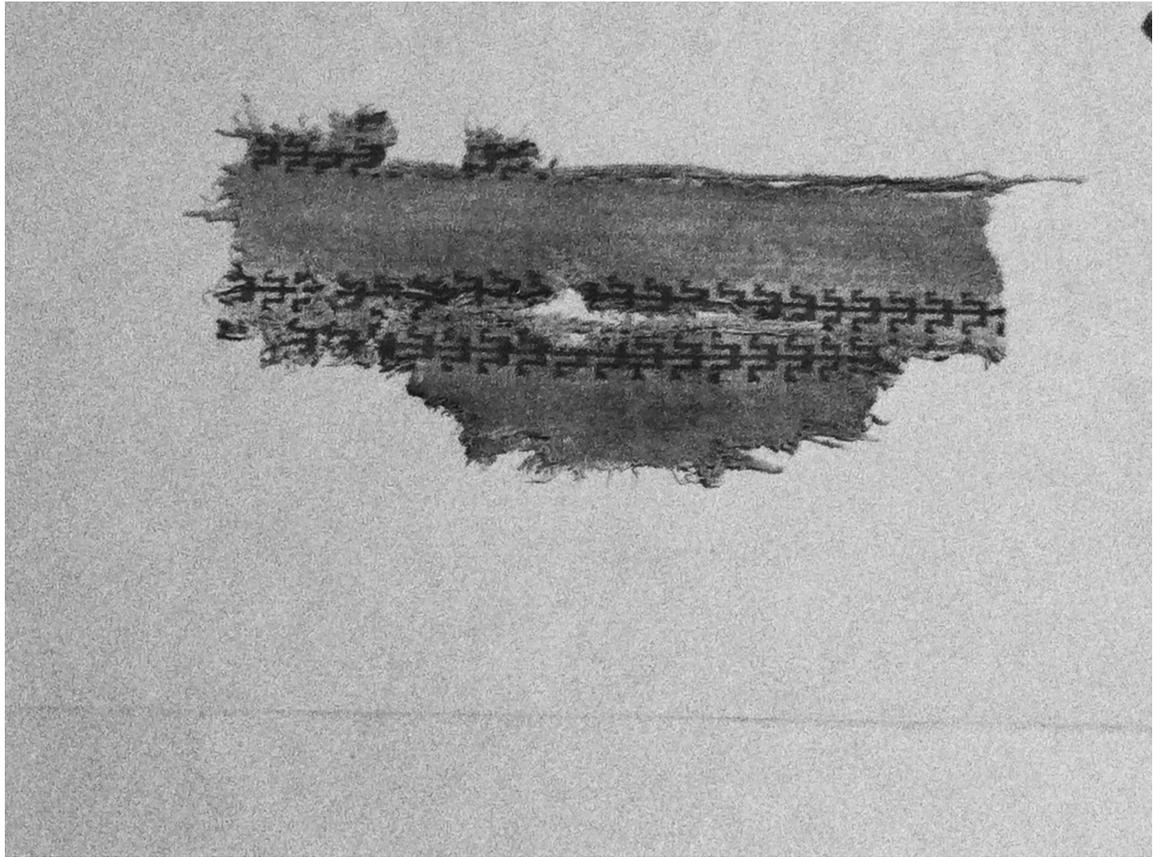
Adobe, jute, graphite, acrylic, linen, wood support
75 x 96 inches

6- *Untitled*, 2013

Adobe, jute, linen, twine, graphite, gesso, acrylic, wood support
57 x 180 inches

All artworks courtesy the artist and UNTITLED, New York







*the information flows
that is yearning*

—Robert Duncan, “A Poem Beginning with a Line by Pindar”

The carved marble or cast bronze statues of the great and memorialized dead in public halls, unless they stand at heights above human reach, possess shiny noses, polished over time by hands of passersby. Men, women, and children are united in the desire to touch graven features, to leave a small stroke at—if not into—legend.

N. Dash, in a conversation with Rachel Nackman, has described the effects of her *Commuter* drawings: “Although folding and unfolding are perhaps the most obvious parts of the gestation of the piece, the touch that is less visible is no less important.” Nackman observes that “the exceedingly physical object we see . . . serves both as a comprehensive record of the duration and intensity of [the artist’s] movements and as an exploration of the inherent capacities of the materials . . .” For Dash, a *Commuter* emerges more from the touch she bestows on the paper than from the traces of its folds as draftsmanship. Creases are visible markers left over from folding, but what’s more effecting in these works is the subtly abrasive ballet of her fingers everywhere on their surfaces. Although Dash works on *Commuters* while riding public transportation, she handles the paper with cool deliberation. This quietly interiorized labor affords the work and the artist a kind of invisibility. She continues working the papers over a number of weeks until they feel ready for the next step in their making.

The relentlessness of Dash’s activity shares certain attributes with such performative predecessors as Vito Acconci. In *Rubbing Piece*, 1970, Acconci, wearing a short sleeved shirt, sat in a restaurant and rubbed one forearm with the fingers of his other hand until the repeated motion massaged away enough of his skin to draw blood. A black and white photograph documenting this activity shows Acconci’s wounded arm, enhaloed by the camera flash, against the dark wood floor of his studio. The shape of the blotch on the artist’s arm is a kind of negative halo wrought into his flesh.

The Acconci photograph offers the record of an affect whose significance is elsewhere. So too with the image that Dash has stipulated for use on the exhibit’s banner and announcement card. The image of a pile of frayed fabric is not like anything else on view here. In fact it is a photograph of a collection, remnants of some of the small cloths that Dash has handled since she was a child. Over time these swatches of cotton fabric have been touched over and over again until they are whispers away from dissolution. The photograph provides a visual inscription of her method by drawing our eyes to an ongoing accumulation of its effect. It is another way to record how information travels from a body to a material.

To return one last time to the *Commuter* works; these reach the end of the line, so to speak, in Dash’s studio when she rubs coatings of powdered graphite or indigo onto them. The sheen of caressed exertion transforms the papers into skins whose residual folds are like the lifelines in one’s palms.

Dash’s paintings are also almost always rubbed surface, of adobe, indigo, graphite or, on occasion, other pigments. The surfaces made with indigo are dryer, brushed or stained with a lighter, but no less diligent, touch. Some indigo panels are barely painted but even these hold a haptic energy. Sometimes lengths of jute and cotton traverse them and these strings also sometimes hang from the work. Whether in coarse jute or finer linen, the fabric is both materially and gesturally saturated. The arduous buildup of adobe offers an attitude almost of plumpness in which the courses of string are embedded. The corporeal inferences in Dash’s paintings at once invite desiring looks and rebuke them. They possess a voluptuous grace that blushes at its recognition.

- Buzz Spector



The photographs accompanying this publication are by N. Dash.

About the artist

N. Dash's work will be the subject of a one-person exhibition at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles in 2014. She has held solo and two-person exhibitions with UNTITLED, New York; and Nicole Klagsbrun, New York. This fall her work will appear in group exhibitions with Art:Concept, Paris; Marianne Boesky, New York; and Andreas Huber, Vienna. Dash's work has been included in previous group exhibitions with Zach Feuer Gallery, New York; Peter Blum, New York; and Marianne Boesky, New York. N. Dash received her MFA from Columbia University. She lives and works in New York and New Mexico.

About the author

Buzz Spector is the Dean of the College and Graduate School of Art in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University, St Louis. Spector was co-founder and editor of WhiteWalls, a magazine of artist writings based in Chicago. His writing has appeared in Artforum, New Art Examiner, and Art Issues and has contributed to numerous exhibition catalogs. Spector's work has been included in exhibitions held with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC; and the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh. He received his MFA from the University of Chicago. Spector lives and works in St Louis.

White Flag Projects

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Founder & Director

Sam Korman
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Deo Dieparine, Katherine Page, Taryn Sirias, Christopher Thompson, Sarah Quattrocchi
Interns

WHITE FLAG PROJECTS
4568 Manchester Avenue
Saint Louis, Missouri 63110

www.whiteflagprojects.org

