

# JAMES COHAN GALLERY

## MICHELLE GRABNER

October 9 - November 15, 2014

Opening Reception: Thursday, October 9, 6-8:00pm



MICHELLE GRABNER 2014, Installation View

James Cohan Gallery is pleased to present the gallery's debut exhibition with **Michelle Grabner**, opening on October 9<sup>th</sup> and running through November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Grabner, a Chicago-based artist, is well known most recently for being one of three curators of the Whitney Biennial 2014. This gallery exhibition is the most comprehensive presentation of the artist's work in New York to date.

With a career spanning over 30 years, Michelle Grabner has dedicated herself to identifying, indexing and transposing patterns. Her mother tongue is that of abstraction and her vocabulary comes from the domestic materials that are close at hand. Grabner came of age as a painter during the 1980s, an era of questioning and appropriation, but her use of tablecloths, bed linens and blankets was less about signifiers, a considerable corner of discourse in that era, and more about the impulse to copy. Pedagogical theory—ideas of making and remaking, inheriting knowledge and passing it on—grew in her practice alongside her work as a longtime art educator. When her son Peter returned home from kindergarten one day with a two-color paper

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weaving, Grabner decided to make her own. After 20 years, Grabner continues to make these weavings, which not only underscore her concepts about elemental compositions and process, but also seem to satisfy another impulse — productivity.

The exhibition features a survey of new work including pattern paintings, paper weavings, photographs, and a collaborative hanging sculpture made with her husband Brad Killam. Grabner employs found compositions such as radial symmetry, gingham weave, and simple warp-and-weft patterns using such straightforward materials as gesso, construction paper, burlap, garbage cans and kitchen implements. Referring to the restraint that runs throughout Grabner's work, artist and colleague Molly Zuckerman-Hartung admires "her commitment to producing a body of work minimal enough to allow projection and profound enough to invite immersion."

Propelled by an interest in collaboration and community, Grabner and Killam built these values into their practices by founding two project spaces: The Suburban, located in the backyard of their Oak Park, Illinois home, and its rural outpost, The Poor Farm in Waupaca County, Wisconsin. As a tenured professor at the Art Institute of Chicago, a seasoned curator, and a frequent contributor to Artforum and other publications, Grabner's relationship to studio work is enriched by her participation in these many dimensions of the art world.

Solo exhibitions include: Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, organized by David Norr (2014); INOVA, The University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (2012); Yale University School of Art (2011); Ulrich Museum, Wichita (2008); and University Galleries, Illinois State University (2006). Grabner has been included in group exhibitions at Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Tate St. Ives, UK; and Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland. Her work is included in the permanent collection of Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; MoCA, Chicago; MUDAM, Luxembourg; Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin; Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin; Daimler Contemporary, Berlin; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Michelle Grabner (born 1962, Oshkosh, WI) lives and works in Oak Park, IL.

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