

Weekend Arts II

The New York Times

Galleries

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

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ARA PETERSON

*Through Dec. 23. Derek Eller
Gallery, 300 Broome Street, Manhat-
tan; 212-206-6411, derekeller.com.*

As a member of Forcefield, the Providence, R.I., art and music collective that disbanded in 2003, Ara Peterson worked in a jumpy, distortion-embracing fusion of noise-rock and strobing videos, often delivered by him and his bandmates in colorful hand-knit shrouds that doubled as sculptures. Lately he has been making paintings, which feel much tamer by comparison but still deliver the odd eye twitch.

The reliefs in his first show at Derek Eller, made of thin laser-cut pieces of wood laminate arranged on-edge in dense, wave-like formations, might make you think of topographical maps, classic Op Art, or very complicated data visualizations. (That last reference, according to the news release, is more or less how these paintings begin; Mr. Peterson “plots the relationships be-

tween color, mood, scale, weight, surface tension and directional flow,” before cutting the wood and assembling and painting it by hand.) The earth-toned ripples in one example (all the works are untitled) beg to be read as markers of elevation; the more high-contrast red, gray and beige crests in another work suggest a Bridget Riley canvas in 3-D, with an added perceptual buzz in blurry areas that have been painted with an atomizer.

Size is another variable; for all the immersive kinetics of the bigger works, you may find yourself drawn to the smaller, tighter ones, which are closer in scale to a computer monitor or TV screen. They feel more of a piece with Mr. Peterson’s video and sound art and with some of the craft-based processes, like knitting, that gave Forcefield its retro-futuristic zing.

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