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## “Staring at the Sun”

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04.26.14-06.14.14 *Saltworks*

This exhibition, curated by Craig Drennen, features four painters who reconceive abstraction’s relationship to the structure of the pictorial plane. Here the surface appears as a flattened spatial arena, a digital transparent layer, a supporting material structure, and finally as an obstacle to be overcome.

Lauren Silva’s works stay closest to a traditional understanding of the pictorial veneer as defining a space to be explored. Her larger canvases boil surrealist landscapes down to their elements, while her smaller works on paper center on Microsoft Paint–like scrawls rendered in meticulous liquid strokes of bright pink and green. Rather than working within the frame, Bonnie Maygarden strives to fuse real surfaces with virtual ones. Her perfectly shadowed expanses of folded and crumpled materials feel solidly three-dimensional, as if their shapes were impressed on the canvas itself. Their transparent facades echo digital visualization: Works like *Grid I*, 2013, probe the limits of the screen’s resolution by cramming each pixel-like square with an impossibly dense arrangement of details.

Surfaces exist primarily as supports in Eleanor Aldrich’s quasi-sculptural paintings, which bulge with crude simulacra of real objects, such as lawn chairs made from gloopy strings of epoxy. Her *Fat Boxes*, 2012, protrude like strange invaders that can find a home neither inside nor outside the frame. These failed objects are simultaneously queasy, comic, and slightly ominous. Finally, the pictorial exterior is punctured, torn, and cut in Jane Fox Hipple’s works, which exhibit various forms of penetration and erasure. Their purple and gray palette recalls the color of old bruises. Abstraction manifests as violence in *Positive Thought / Negative Thought*, 2014, a black canvas with an excised rectangle in its center surrounded by ragged wounds. Mounted with its face to the wall in a pose of shame or contempt, it leaves whatever provoked its mutilation a mystery. When the potential of surfaces is exhausted, all that is left is their destruction.