

Chronogram

Allyson Strafella Exhibits Color-Saturated Drawings at Philip Douglas Fine Art in Hudson

Philip Douglas Fine Art exhibits Allyson Strafella's "the place of a place" through August 30.

by [George Lawson](#)

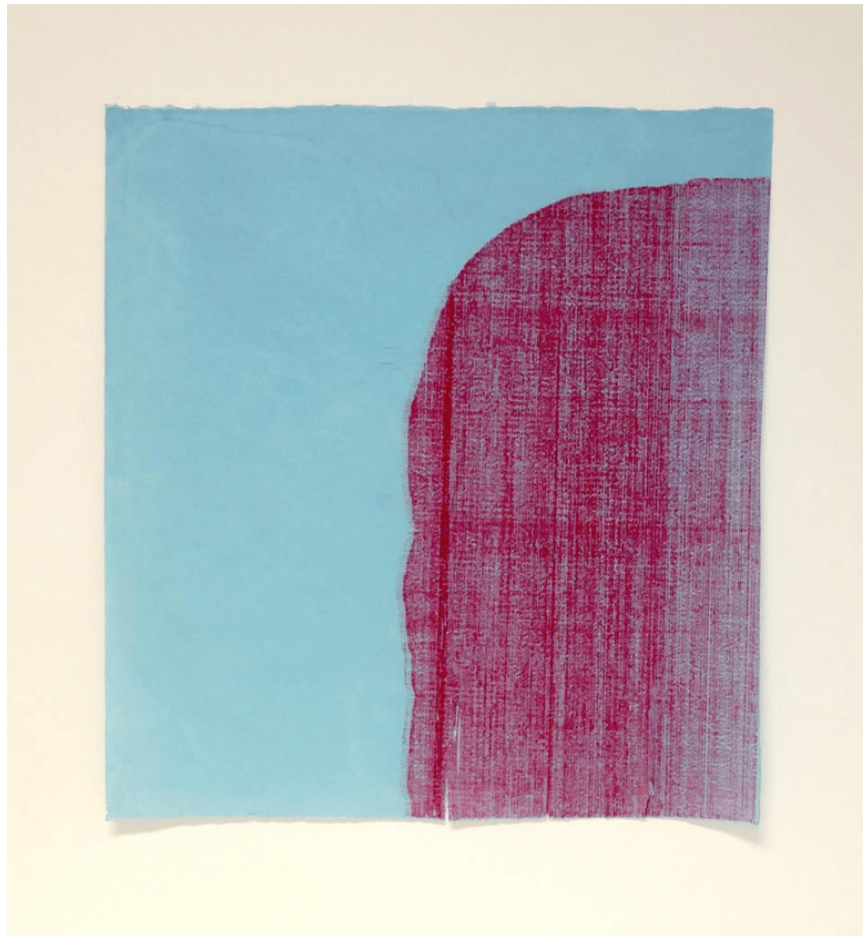
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[Allyson Strafella](#)'s art and her working method are new to me. I went to her show at [Philip Douglas Fine Art](#) last week with enough background to be willing to brave the rain, but not enough to know exactly what I'd see. I had the experience under my belt of a few pieces from a previous group and a subsequent studio visit that left quite an impression, a cicada's chorus of impressions, really. Douglas's space is a found object, all dusty carpet, mid-century beige and latticework, like a leather-elbowed tweed you'd find hanging in a vintage clothing store. What I found was an installation of perfectly nestled gems, Strafella's ether-doused objects dovetailing seamlessly and unabashedly with their adopted surroundings. Things as they are, Wabi Sabi.

Hers is an art that balances a focused will to actualize, to bring into being, with an open willingness to let things fall where they may. Briefly, she inserts pigment-infused sheets into a typewriter and uses the field availed by the carriage's width and rotation to

assemble shapes, one clacked offset at a time. Essentially grid-based, her imagery presents as saturated color, the imprint either additive or subtractive, depending on whether she keeps the transfer sheet or the sheet receiving the transfer. Sometimes she gathers the crumbly shards that are an occasional by-product of her banging away at fragile paper and includes these in the breadth of her statement. Technically, these are works on paper, but their tenacious physicality and the manner in which they use color to frontally address and affirm the plane lift them out of the relatively modest intimacies of drawing and into the broader ambitions of painting, this despite their small size. Practically speaking, I'd call Strafella a painter. She eschews framing and affixes her work directly to the wall with some archival film. They sit on the wall like a cat that owns the place.



Strafella is creating within a subculture that values our predicament, robust and ephemeral, as physical beings. The one body problem. The niche she has pounded out with her typewriters is deservedly hers alone, but she is not working in a vacuum. Were I able to cast her in a dream ensemble of like-minded sensates, I'd include the wall scraps of Richard Tuttle, the monochromes of the late Marcia Hafif and Rudolf de Crignis, and the beeswax sheets of Wolfgang Laib. For sheer persistence, I'd add the pen scratches of Max Cole and the algorithms of James Siena. There are echos in some of her shapes of fellow Hudsonite Suzan Frecon, and Bushwick painter Michael

Voss. She uses prepared typewriters in ways that call to mind John Cage's prepared pianos. Her pieces' DNA includes elements of traditional beadwork and cross-stitch embroidery, as well as Tibetan sand painting. I'm reminded of any number of stubbornly clinging, historical parchment and textile fragments from the Dead Sea Scrolls to Mbuti Pygmy bark cloths. She has plugged into something universal. "place" by Allyson Strafella, 2026.



Strafella chose to call her offering "the place of a place." She lives here, in the United States, in New York, in Hudson. Her art is a product of the same society, the same art world, that prioritizes—has put first for many years now—identity, politics, narrative, and commodity. People love celebrity, a good story, and a good fight. And the more money involved, the better. Yet the implication of Strafella's art is that another strain is alive and well, one that navigates by sinew and bleed, one so matter-of-fact that it makes an impression by literally making an impression, one pound on the key after another. To posit that a frayed, six inch silhouette of colored paper can move the needle in the present gale is tantamount to cultivating orchids in a hurricane, and no less heroic. Tenacity is a part of it, ants and rubber tree plants, but more deeply embedded is an instinct that trusts that the universe is holographic, that the affirmation of one piece of the selva affirms the whole fabric, and the acknowledgment of the present moment, the materials at hand and the place where one stands is the shortest path to setting the

whole pageant spinning. Strafella's keystrokes are an apt analogy to the building blocks of art making, and as disproportionate in the power they hold as the energy in any atom.