

CLIFTON BENEVENTO

LOCATION: 515 BROADWAY NEW YORK NY 10012 PHONE: 212 431 6325 FAX: 212 334 4703
EMAIL: INFO@CLIFTONBENEVENTO.COM WEBSITE: WWW.CLIFTONBENEVENTO.COM

NEW YORK OBSERVER

‘Polly Apfelbaum: A Handweaver’s Pattern Book’ at Clifton Benevento

BY ANDREW RUSSETH



Exhibition view of ‘Polly Apfelbaum: A Handweaver’s Pattern Book’ at Clifton Benevento. (Courtesy Clifton Benevento)

For more than three decades Polly Apfelbaum has been slicing, dying and painting fabric and carefully arranging it on the floors of galleries. The results are resolutely ebullient displays that combine postminimalism, installation art and good old-fashioned craft in a glorious, unified kingdom where space is topsy-turvy and color reigns supreme.

Ms. Apfelbaum’s first solo exhibition at Clifton Benevento has her leaping from the floor to the wall and the ceiling. She has arrayed 50 rayon-velvet panels around the space, each bearing sumptuous grids of color that she applied by hand, pressing ink through a punch card, dot by dot by dot, so that they look like psychedelic quilts. There are scrappy monochromes, some with soothingly relaxed patterns and others that positively burst with energy and competing influences.

Small ceramic spheres hang low to the floor, suspended from pipes by strings. They mark out the gallery and also refashion it, rendering it uncanny. As usual, Ms. Apfelbaum gets a lot done with very little. She’s one of the best we’ve got.

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