

Laskey weaves in printing

Ruth Laskey's textile works, made of threads she'd carefully dye, then weave on a basic loom, are modest in scale and hushed in palette. But her latest pieces see her quietly growing in scope.

In the past, the 2010 SECA Award winner went against her medium's tradition, forgoing repeating patterns to make singular modernist statements that, as *Artforum International Magazine* put it in 2014, "eschew the bombastic in favor of a cool craftiness." "Quadrants," her Capital exhibit of new soft ground etchings made in collaboration with Paulson Bott Press, finds Laskey exploring repetition in grids of four using her two foundational patterns: a plain weave and twill weave.

"People ask, 'Is that really a print, because it has so much texture to it?' or 'Is it a photographic process?'" the 40-year-old San Francisco artist says of the response to her new series. "That's what I like about the weavings. You really have to see them in person and experience the materiality of them. The prints are like that, too — you get something out of them close up."

For the etchings, Laskey made weavings simply to run through the press to create the printing plates. The minute detail and



Capital

Ruth Laskey's etching "Twill Weave Grid (Permanent Violet/Ruby Red/Cobalt Blue/Primrose Yellow)."

Quadrants: Gallery hours noon-5 p.m. Saturdays and by appointment. Through March 5. Capital, 716 Sacramento St., S.F. (415) 706-1786. www.capital.gallery.

painstaking intricacy of the originals were captured in the wax coating the plates, though the weavings didn't survive the process.

"I had to be willing to make something that I was willing to destroy," she says.

Laskey picked up the thread of weaving late in her undergraduate painting studies at California College of the Arts, in the early 2000s, but once she attempted to make her own linen canvas, she was hooked.

"I love painting, but I feel like weaving is more fulfilling because of the length of time it takes," she says, "and the amount I can put into it."

— Kimberly Chun