

# CHEIM & READ



## Jenny Holzer

★★★★★

"**Archive**," Cheim & Read, through Sat 17 (see Chelsea)

Somewhere between the Freedom of Information Act and the government's right to withhold information in the interest of national security, there is the no-man's-land of redaction, the act of blacking out sections of sensitive documents before they're released to the public. These swatches of unreadable data—as black and bold as a Franz Kline brushstroke—are the focus of Jenny Holzer's current exhibition of paintings (a lone LED display is also on view). Holzer took recently released government documents, pertaining to Guantánamo and Iraq interrogations, and used the checkered patterns of their elided texts as the focus of her aesthetic enterprise.

To create these large-scale works, Holzer silk-screened images of

government transcripts on canvas recalling Andy Warhol's technique. As with his infamous "Disaster Paintings," the sense of dread is palpable here, even before we begin reading the text. Holzer establishes a formal conflict between the orderly letterheads and the messy Magic Marker strokes, which inevitably conjures acts of aggression. But despite her use of a gesture that Warhol laced with irony, Holzer's project is more akin to the earnest Abstract Expressionism, evoking works by Kline, Adolph Gottlieb and even Clyfford Still.

Some might argue that this project aestheticizes political content. But in an era when information overload has numbed the American public, Holzer has found a way to make us care about the details of violence, instilling a sense of responsibility to discover what's behind the blacked-out phrases.—*Barbara Pollack*



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