

Remarks on Love: Alexandra Grant's Born to Love



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Alexandra Grant's solo exhibition "Born to Love" at [Lowell Ryan Projects](#) is the latest in her ongoing series that considers the moral integrity in Sophocles' play *Antigone*. The title, taken from Antigone's statement "I was born to love not to hate," made to her uncle Creon in response to her defiance for her slain brother — in feeling and ceremonial action — is abstracted, bifurcated and mirrored as an object amongst a field of jutting angles, immersive gestures and swells of color. Grant pivots Antigone's ethics of care through densely collaged painting on paper.



Installation Shot, 'Born to Love' by Alexandra Grant at Lowell Ryan Projects

Grant began her *Antigone 3000* series in 2014, initially exploring the narrative through what she named "half-Rorschach's": splattering's of oil amid rows of lines suspended on linen. Sans text, these works decidedly proposed the subconscious as the point of departure, leaving the mark making as something determined through the guise of discrete viewership. With these new works from 2016 to 2018, she introduces the axiom within the body of each piece, continuing the possibilities of intuitive guidance, albeit with a seemingly more direct channel. And yet, "I was born to love not to hate" punctuates the page fragmented, backward and adopting a bilaterally symmetrical form. Antigone's words subsist in opaque legibility; floating between the abstract landscape which subsumes the surface behind it.

Grant's fore/background is one of bright and muted pigments that seep in and out of linear stacks and chevroned badges, splintering and overwhelming uniformity and orientation. With "She said to Creon (6)" (2016–2018), which leered from me across the gallery, Grant steeps us in a wave of cyan and slate, directing each contour and pool of ink into the waxed rubbings of Antigone prayer. The repetition of the broken refrain amidst the depths of blues seemed a meditative offering on the profundity in the phrase and actions of disobedience, which lead to Antigone's death. "She said to Creon (8)" (2018) and, "She said to Creon (5)" (2016–2018) invoke the wrath by which she falls in the flared arcs with licks of yellow, red, and orange.

In the impulse to see and make legible the forms and shapes of language within Grant's pieces, there is a type of journeying along the recess of one's mind, one I imagine she hopes for each viewer. Language however situated within a piece of visual work (obscured, doubled, mirrored, or sharp) crawls along memory, persuading synapses to explore its older connections while poking at the possibility of new ones. How then does one situate the strains in Antigone's declaration? Where does the refrain "I was born to love not to hate," pull towards and hold near? What declarative acts against atrocious edict and violent order are the reminders and invigorators of what has and can be done?



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When Grant embarked on *Antigone 3000*, her concerns grew from an interest in the relation between individuals and the state, the horrors of black death through the killing of Mike Brown, to the vitriol of the current president, and the collective body of protest. "Born to Love" is a type of refusal, twisting and turning with the concerns of our now, reaching across the arenas of injustice. With these works, Grant provides an opportunity to consider what love might look like, which exceeds the brutality of an imposed rule.

Born to Love is on view at Lowell Ryan Projects, June 1 — July 6, 2019.

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