

## CHICAGO

### Dianna Frid

#### devening projects + editions

Five hundred years ago, Albrecht Dürer created a vivid woodcut of a rhinoceros not from first-hand observation but from hearsay. Now that we've closed the gap between the exotic and the observable, one can use Dürer's method to describe the world retroactively. That artistic strategy was manifest in Dianna Frid's recent solo exhibition. In this materially sensitive and richly formal showing of wall-bound and freestanding sculptures, handmade cloth books, and lithographs, it was tempting to disregard Frid's titles and simply float among her boundless, freeform abstractions, but the titles frame the works. "Evidence of the Material World" was the exhibition's name, and though the material world has not vanished, Frid re-created its elements by interpreting found texts.

Frid draws content from poetry and also from scientific treatises, which she reads as lyric, their florid

language seeded with ideals for educating and inspiring readers. She illustrates comets, waves, the moon, and clouds. Although these natural phenomena are well explained by science, they continue to charm even casual observers. The constant appearance of stars, sunsets, and clouds enables us to measure ourselves in relation to those who came before. Just as myth gave way to science, so too will current interpretations yield to a future unknown, while the waves continue to roll over an invisible arc.

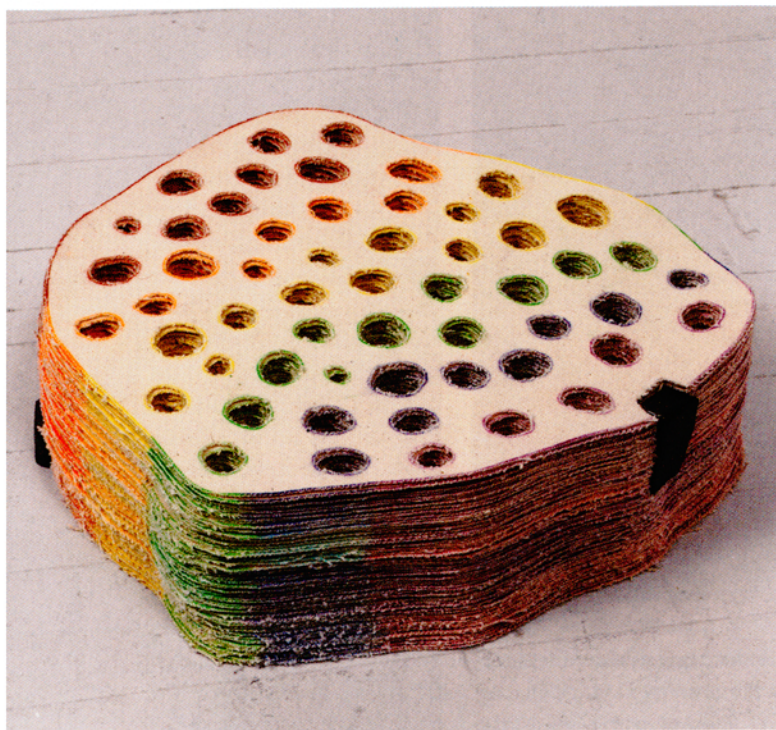
As if rediscovering light, Frid finds it in reflective foil, which she uses to activate an internal light source in her work. Like scientific and poetic texts, Frid's works are proxies for an original experience, crafted in a loose likeness and spun until they match the magnificence of that which evades capture. Frid detaches her materials from their conventions, using raw linen canvas, for instance,

as pages in accordion books or layered on the floor in *The Refulgents* (all works 2011), which resembles a crepe cake in construction and a cosmic lotus-seed pod in form, flecked with a rainbow spectrum. The layered-canvas sculpture has a small notch removed from one side, which Frid filled with a smooth chunk of graphite. This small surprise becomes visually available if you look at the sculpture long enough—a gesture that indicates Frid's working method. Materials guide her hand, while she tailors a world of her own making.

Shannon Stratton, a proponent of fiber arts and soft sculpture, has remarked that fiber art is "two-and-a-half dimensional." Certainly one can see Frid playing with spatial perception when she uses raw linen canvas for *Being the Transmitter*, a wall-bound sculpture whose small wedges push the textile slightly forward and produce pockets of shadow. Discussing the height of a pair

of plaster-coated monoliths, Frid explains that they are "the relative length of two Homeric lines." They are about the height of a person, which makes them an excellent way to keep Homer alive.

—Jason Founberg



Left: Dianna Frid, *The Refulgents*, 2011. Cloth, colored pencil, clay, paper, and graphite, 37.75 x 13 x 11.5 in.