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Gallery chronicle
by James Panero

A final word about “Mel Kendrick: Water Drawings” now at David Nolan.⁶ I reported on these creations last month in my chronicle of the Miami fairs, where David Nolan first brought them to market at Art Basel. Like everything Kendrick touches, they are created through an intense internal logic that at first seems fully laid out but becomes more mysterious the more you observe. Like his sculptures made of positive and negative volumes, the “water drawings” are created through positive and negative molds, with shapes from a machine-age boneyard that Kendrick arranges flat before slopping on the paper pulp and squeezing out the water under pressure. The resulting “drawing” is itself a negative of the molds and exists in relief on the paper surface, which Kendrick also highlights with graphite. Now at Nolan, where several of these sheets are arrayed in the main gallery, we can see the evolution of the process. By increasing the complexity of the molds and lowering the contrast of the graphite, shapes not only sit on one another but thread together in a visual play, which was only enhanced as I walked around them and took in the surfaces undulating in relief. As with his sculptures, Kendrick knows he’s on to something. He may not know what just yet, but he knows it’s great.

⁶ “Mel Kendrick: Water Drawings” opened at David Nolan Gallery, New York, on January 16 and remains on view through March 1, 2014.