

# ART

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# NEW ENGLAND

## REGIONAL REVIEWS

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### **New England College Gallery/Henniker Farid Haddad: Recent Drawings**

The twenty-six images in this austere, understated show present the viewer with various issues in perception. At the artist's request the works are shown without titles, numbers, or explanatory comments. The viewer must chart a path through these images without extraneous information.

These gouache-and-watercolor abstractions of moderate size, rendered entirely in a monochrome of blacks and grays, resonate with oppositions, which together possess considerable power. Lying somewhere between drawing and painting, they balance transparency and opacity, light and dark, field and ground, expressive mark and formal symmetry, abandon and restraint—all heightened by the implied continuation of the images beyond their nearly square formats. Many are in two parts, a lighter half balancing horizontally a darker, each with its particular turbulence of stroke. These images often imply a horizon, a reading confounded by the vertical orientation of other related works.

The confrontation of form and expression is intensified in meticulous groupings of images, in triptychs based on light-dark alternations, in image-inversions, or in suggestions of landscape forms. Individually the works are expressionistic, particularly in the turbulent, often distressed surfaces with their varied, opaque swipes and swirls, and in the sometimes sensuous interaction between the darker tones and the competing textures of paper and wash. However, the images also create balances of tone, line, and plane, particularly in the series where the field is broken into three rectangular zones. This dialogue between form and expression in Haddad's recent drawings is both intriguing and essential.

—Robert R. Craven