

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

MOLLY SMITH

KS ART

73 LEONARD STREET

OCTOBER 18-DECEMBER 1



Load,
2006.

For her solo gallery debut, Molly Smith makes unexpected bedfellows of simplicity and ambiguity through a modest collection of paintings and cast-plaster sculptures. Smith's barely-there forms, rendered in watercolor on paper, are harnessed by the empty space surrounding them, as in *Grounded* (all works 2006), a pair of tube socks packing bricks, and *Lean*, a series of thin lines moving crabwise across the sheet. In other works, the space deepens from within, as in *Hatch*, in which the interior of an open box reveals seemingly endless watercolor shadows. The artist's recent switch to larger sheets of paper does not diminish the intimacy that characterized her previous works, and the use of singular titles, also new to her practice, helps make explicit the references on the page through sparse means. Small narratives emerge from these poetic works: *Tear*, a stunning watercolor of a torn sheet of paper set out to sea, curiously relates to *Load*, a cast-hydrocal sculpture of paper cradling an ink-cum-oil spill. *Bust*, a sculpture that assumes the look of both a beat-up bare canvas affixed to the wall and a body imprinted on a beach towel, possesses an unusual affinity with the work of Robert Gober and

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Rachel Whiteread. Smith shows that simple ideas can be quite complex. With a quixotic approach to paper, she takes this platitude and makes it her own—no easy feat.

—Lauren O'Neill-Butler