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## The New Criterion

*Gallery Chronicle*

by James Panero

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Mel Kendrick has staked his career on exploring the positive and the negative in drawing, printmaking, photography, and sculpture. With the eye of a photographic plate, he finds the black in the white, the projection in the emulsion, the print in the press, and the shape in the void. Most known for his sculptures carved out of blocks that form their own pedestals, Kendrick has a varied studio practice that may find his stamps turned into sculptures turned into photographs, all in a flipping, tumbling performance of process and materials.

Now at Chelsea's David Nolan Gallery, "Mel Kendrick: Woodblock Drawings" reassembles a series of large-scale woodblock prints created in 1992 and 1993 along with a single spidery wooden construction. What from far away resemble surrealist drawings are revealed, upon closer inspection, to be enormous paper sheets printed with equally enormous plywood stamps. Closer still and the manufacturing of these stamped objects becomes apparent, with the swirling jigsaw cuts and metal hardware, down to the Phillips-head screws, that must have held the stamps together. In the paper print of this wooden matrix, cuts become lines and woodgrain becomes shading, with the wood's textural variations now transformed into the stark contrast of a black print on white paper. Kendrick calls these prints "drawings:" and in the silky lines of the woodgrain they draw out a startling impression.

"Mel Kendrick: Woodblock Drawings" opened at David Nolan Gallery, New York, on September 7 and remains on view through October 28, 2017.