

# ARTFORUM

[Peter Sacks](#)

[PAUL RODGERS / 9W](#)

529 West 20 Street 9th Floor

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**Peter Sacks, *Necessity 7*, 2007–2009**, mixed media, 6' 4 3/4" x 12' 9 1/2".

Text spills across the surfaces of Peter Sacks's paintings, wandering back and forth across mountains of paint, fabric, lace, and fishing net. In *Necessity 12*, 2008–2009, Sacks's handwritten transcriptions of R. F. Scott's Antarctic journal unspool like footprints in the snow or swim through cobalt depths in spiraling streams. In other paintings, language is more muscular, marching down the canvas in long, even rows of inky letters. Here, text bleeds into textile, as words are tattooed on cream linen undergarments that have been wheedled and scrunched through Sacks's typewriter. Words stack into a pyramid of piled, folded language in *Necessity 7*, 2007–2009, calling to mind Robert Smithson but also looking past him to the archaic: to the ancient weight of papyrus that illuminates the forgotten origins of text as *texture*, as *textile*.

Sacks speaks of his "liminal figures stranded at threshold of visibility," and it is these boundaries his paintings treat. Edges, whether sewn seams of clothing or the borders between triptychs, insinuate themselves as metaphors for the limits of thinking. They are "critical" Kantian paintings in this sense, although ones concerned less with cognitive bounds than with the multidimensional cartographies of consciousness that lie between, that is, with painting spinning thoughts and their unraveling. The Derridean thread metaphor seems apt for an artist who so self-consciously plays with the tissue of the canvas and the warp and weft of timeworn linens, trawling spare threads across paint like errant lines of drawing. Sacks's textiles also suggest the gauze of bandages, the wounds of body and time, perhaps even shrouds or cerements. These paintings are not only mounds of paint and words but burial mounds, too. Such funerary themes come to eclipse *Necessity 9*, 2004–2008, a burial ground of a painting, beneath whose blue-black surface is lodged the Gettysburg Address.

— **Leora Maltz-Leca**

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