

# ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

## New York

### Cornelia Parker

D'AMELIO TERRAS  
525 West 22nd Street, Ground Floor  
January 9–February 13

If every .44 Magnum belonged to Cornelia Parker, the world would be a better place. In this exhibition, the British artist finds beauty not simply in the mundane but in the murderous. Using the lead from a lone melted bullet, she creates an elegant, spidery wire drawing. Each work is then suspended between panes of glass to cast spindly shadows against its white backdrop. (Like a skeptical child at a magic act, I craned my neck and squinted, desperate to decipher the tricks of her process.) In the nine small drawings, Parker develops a minimalist schema—the flat grid—extracting a rhythmic vitality in the successive irregularities and progressions. Her interest in 1950s encyclopedias is apparent in the works' seriality; she is scientifically charting possibility: a single material, a single length, innumerable variations.

Parker maintains an improvisational quality in this exercise, as if even she were not privy to what form the material will take next. One drawing appears like a fence smashed in; another looks torn apart. One seems to be growing and another shrinking. Knots at the corner of interior squares recall those in a string of pearls; if a portion breaks, the whole is not lost. The .44 Magnum itself is laden with pop-cultural associations from *Dirty Harry* (1971) to *Taxi Driver* (1976). Parker decontextualizes the object, thus divorcing the material from both mythic and actual violence. With multiple layers to strip, she explores the point at which any idea or object becomes completely abstract. A heavy bullet with a high velocity becomes something light and deceptively static. Fear is made material, only to dissolve into quiet meditation. This is surely an exhibition about dualities, but instead of black and white, Parker seems to relish the multitude of grays.



Cornelia Parker, *Bullet Drawing*, 2009, lead from a bullet drawn into wire. 24 7/8 x 24 7/8

– Cameron Shaw