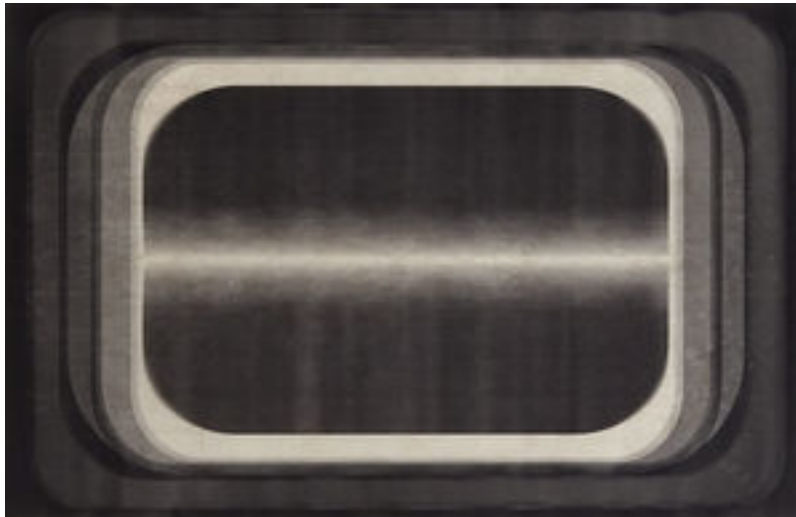


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MARSHA COTTRELL
Eleven Rivington

By R.C. Baker



Since 1998, Cottrell has used laser printers to make her drawings, achieving fields of impenetrable blacks – sometimes by reprinting the same sheet and building up layers of the rich iron-oxide toner – striated with white lines, circles, and other geometries, both hard-edged and smoothly gradated. Considering that carbon is the base of all life, it is perhaps not surprising that Cottrell's dense drawings have a lively presence, at times conjuring visions of planetary systems collapsed to the intimate scale of letter, legal, and tabloid paper sizes. But old-school printer blotches and scrapes keep the work grounded in the everyday banality of office tasks and user errors, the music of the spheres pulled down through an old transistor radio. In some works, ethereal shifts of gray recall test patterns from the antediluvian age of television, analog signals that even now are speeding across the cosmos, forever-late calling cards from humanity. Cottrell's mysterious, lovely images feel like the replies we may receive in answer one day.