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GARTH WEISER

CASEY KAPLAN

525 West 21st Street, New York



Garth Weiser, *Nautilus*, 2011, oil on canvas, 108 x 89.

Garth Weiser's paintings are eye catching, but they can be chilly. The hard-edge compositions in his 2009 exhibition at Casey Kaplan drew on classic examples of modernist-inspired late-20th-century graphic design (Lászió Moholy-Nagy by way of the Valvoline Oil logo) and were just as coolly effective. These were followed by arrangements of striped bands laid down at varying angles over painterly grounds, whose drips, stains and smears served as a counterpoint to the vibrating interference patterns made by the crisscrossing striations. Weiser's recent exhibition (all works 2011) at Casey Kaplan showed him using a similar combination of chance and craft to produce his most exciting work to date.

Most of the pieces feature a raised, all-over moiré pattern that looks more machined than handcrafted. Over an abstract painting on linen, Weiser uses masking tape and dimensional fabric paint in squeeze bottles to create layers of evenly spaced, parallel ridges of a single color—usually black, white or blue. The interaction between these layers, one usually made up of straight lines and the other of concentric arcs, results in unpredictable rippling effects that resemble knotty pine or watered silk. (The final appearance is unknown to the artist until he peels off the tape.)

The underlying lyrical abstractions, obscured by these buzzing lattices of paint when seen up close, become more visible the further from the canvas one stands. At times the underpaintings seem perfunctory, even as the moirés, paradoxically, seem intentional. But a few of the works suggest productive lines of inquiry: and turquoise depths of the shimmering white Unimark Unlimited; Tobin's Spirit Guide, an uncompromising gray monochrome, might just be the best piece in the show.

In several lovely works on paper, forms seem to be dissolving as fast as they are generated. Drawing #26's mesh of white lines sports a fungal bloom of copper leaf; and the halftone dot pattern in Drawing #32 is as naggingly unreadable as a degraded digital image. Poised at the intersection of transcendental abstraction and scientific imaging, analog and digital, form and formlessness, Weiser's latest paintings have resonance that definitively takes them far beyond good design and the clever recycling of past art movements and into promising new territory.

--Anne Doran