

The New York Times

Like Watching Paint Thrive

In Five Chelsea Galleries, the State of Painting

By ROBERTA SMITH June 28, 2012

Stretching Painting

The 10 artists in “Stretching Painting” at Galerie Lelong don’t so much push the medium into space as meddle with its physical properties at close quarters, on the wall.

Sometimes the exercise is disarmingly simple, as with the magnified brushwork and pale colors (diluted with plaster) of Alex Kwartler’s two large paintings on plywood. Sometimes it is startlingly obsessive, as with the work of Gabriel Pionkowski, a young artist who unravels canvas, colors the individual threads and partly reweaves them into stripes or jacquardlike patterns; or Donald Moffett’s wildly suggestive combinations of furlike paint surfaces on emphatically perforated wood.

Kate Shepherd and Jim Lee indicate new possibilities for the modernist monochrome. Assembled by Veronica Roberts, a New York-based curator and scholar, the works here can sometimes feel a bit small-bore. This is relieved by Patrick Brennan’s “Boomtown (A long road home),” a big, bristling collage festooned with small paintings, and Lauren Luloff’s “Flame Violet and Golden,” which seems pieced together from textile remnants that are actually hand-painted on different scraps of cloth, using bleach. It has some of the scenery-chewing exuberance of Julian Schnabel, which is quite refreshing.



Lauren Luloff, *Flame Violet and Golden*, 2012, Oil, bleached bed sheets, and fabric on muslin, 82 x 57 inches (208.3 x 144.8 cm)