



***Non-Identical Abstraction Engine***

Group Exhibition

ACME

6150 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048

January 9, 2010 - February 6, 2010

**Abstraction at ACME**

by Ed Schad

The front gallery of Acme's somewhat recently enlarged space positively pops with abstraction at the moment with a curious little group show curated by writer and critic Jan Tumlir. Exhibition artists Alexis Harding, Robert Linsley, Michael Murphy, and Sasha Pierce came surprisingly together in a lab funded by a science grant in Canada earmarked for the interaction between science and painting. (When, oh when, will America be so generous.) Linsley and Tumlir, partially to lay out their intentions produced a small pamphlet of their many conversations leading up to the show, mostly dealing with where abstraction and its theories can be or should be positioned at this particular point in the history of art. The validity of their claims will have to be left for a different venue, but I can safely encourage a visit as it easily affords multiple opportunities to grapple with what a handful of talented individuals claim the purpose of painting is in the present and by doing so perhaps prognosticate a direction for its future.



The thrill for me was Alexis Harding, who mostly arranges paintings so that they can literally produce themselves. For one work, the artist spent days arranging wet drops and runs of paint on a board then raising the board up, letting gravity finish the process: it is Morris Louis without the expressionist lineage attached - it is painter as machine. Finding it necessary to remove the painter from the painting as much as possible and focus on a sort of post-human, objective criteria for abstract painting, I find the theory behind the work, well, completely abhorrent and utterly ridiculous. The result, despite itself however, is glorious to look at. When I say that it is beautiful, it might send a chill through hearts of those that produced the show with a more cerebral mission in mind, but anyway, the work is beautiful.

Sasha Pierce is another artist to look for in the show. She produces (also by a sort of mechanistic process somewhere between painting and decorating a cake) obsessive patterned works, astonishing in their execution. The tiny, purposeful works are plump with paint, but you would never know it -- the rigorous finish makes the production almost feel like they were produced on a loom. They attempt to be impersonal and monastic works, riding modernist theory into the sunset, but what interests me the most is the stubborn presence of Pierce when you view the works. You cannot avoid wondering what particular story created an artist of such obsessive detail and finely focused attention.

- Ed Schad