

ART PAPERS

STRIKING IDEAS + MOVING IMAGES + SMART TEXTS

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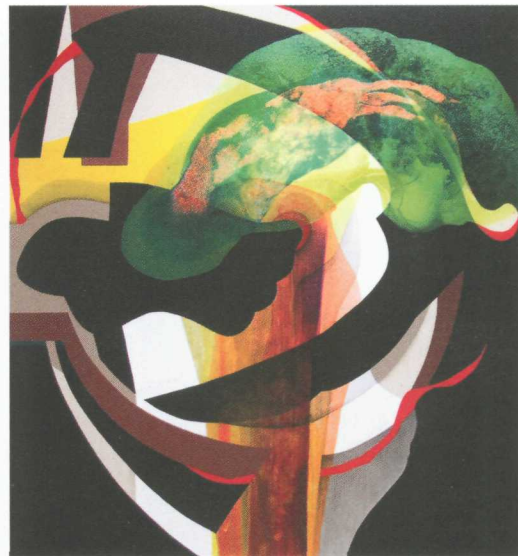
RESPONSIBILITY
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CARRIE MOYER
WORCESTER, MA

Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood by Sigmund Freud. The images of the daguerreotypes reproduced in these books seems to have been much poured over, as evidenced by multiple fingertip smudges along the margins of the pages. Feyrer's literal reproductions of three silver daguerreotypes are actually quite difficult to see, and not the best work technically speaking; but everything coheres in the 16mm film *The Artist Studio*, 2012, where the restaging of Daguerre's artist studio is documented with unbridled improvisation and a sense of methodical joy.

The Artist Studio is never the same film: it loops, unhinged to its soundtrack, which features a steady voice reading a section from Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex Urbina*s regarding the material differences between the studio of a painter and the studio of sculptor. The words spoken and the images seen brush past each other in serendipitous rhythm. All of Daguerre's haphazardly arranged studio objects—from the stone relief of a woman to the gilded-frame painted portrait—have been perversely reproduced with cardboard and paper drawings in the most ephemeral manner. The film embeds the artist studio within an encroaching larger world, spinning and impatiently absorbing every aspect of the space where the filming of the staged studio takes place. Unraveling the isolation of the artist studio, yet mired in reference, Feyrer as the artist—and Feyrer as the trickster—meets her audience halfway as she reconsiders the art world's alternatives and opportunities. The show may suffer from something of a nervous tic, but that does not betray a lack of vision.

—Amy Fung

True to its title, *Carrie Moyer: Interstellar* transports viewers to alternate dimensions in time and space through the artist's evocative painted abstractions [Worcester Art Museum; February 11—August 19, 2012]. Her languid, biomorphic figures drift across the canvas like the wax forms in a lava lamp, and her colors are no less luminous. These contingent shapes invite associations ranging from the familiar contours of the human body to the remote reaches of outer space. Initially, these compositions resemble collages, but it soon becomes clear that the planes of color do not interlock in any predictable fashion. The spatial relationship between shapes is ambiguous, each form appearing simultaneously to overlap and recede behind those around it. Moyer further confuses surface and depth by juxtaposing flat planes of color with windows into highly textured landscapes that seem to exist behind the picture plane. One of the joys of viewing her work is the mental exercise of making sense of these forms, which playfully evade logical categorization.

Interstellar is staged in a small, cubic space that retains the intimacy of a gallery. Viewers confront her most recent work on the back wall as they enter, with earlier canvases flanking either side. The paintings from *The Stone Age* and *Arcana* series, 2006–2009, feature prehistoric motifs in iconic, centralized compositions that reflect her interest in poster design. Despite these ancient overtones, the works are in dialogue with twentieth-century artistic practices. *Numina*, 2007, depicts the Three Graces as fertility goddesses. As in most of her works, Moyer positions her subjects on a dark field, highlighting the veil of electric, neon color that washes down over the trio. The reference to Morris Louis' poured technique seems intentional; yet while Louis employs this procedure to render his process transparent, Moyer's stains behave more like unruly bodily fluids, spilling across her otherwise hard-edged contours.

In recent years, Moyer has drawn inspiration from the landscapes of New Hampshire and New Mexico for her *Canonical* series, 2011. While these sources come

through in the sunset tones of *Into the Woods*, 2011, and in the swampy greens and purples of *Down Underneath*, 2011, this series' most significant departure lies in the heightened sense of motion in her compositions. Their writhing, attenuated shapes invoke a broader range of associations than her previous work, since they are divorced from any single referent. In *The Tiger's Wife*, 2011, for example, Moyer draws from her full arsenal of painting techniques: gestural lines, indexical handprints, films of translucent pigment, passages of exposed canvas, and a mix of glossy and matte finishes. Sprays of white droplets humorously allude to Jackson Pollock's drips while also resembling the actual glitter applied to many of her paintings. It is tempting to interpret her use of glitter as yet another reference to "women's work," but Moyer exceeds these craft connotations by successfully exploiting the formal potential of the medium. In *Into the Woods*, black granules create a sense of surface texture, while brassy orange sparkles ignite her already smoldering palette in *Red Widow*, 2008.

Red Widow's blood-red stain and butterfly motif subtly recall the vaginal imagery of second-wave feminism, and corporeal forms recur across the exhibition. Moyer provocatively filters these feminist symbols through her contemporary perspective, layering them with references to graphic design and mid-century modernism. In so doing, she challenges the patriarchal conventions of modernist styles while also questioning the essentialism of earlier iterations of feminist art. Although her work is rooted in feminist critique, her suggestive abstract forms resonate beyond this context. Ultimately, Moyer's most radical gesture in *Interstellar* may be her unapologetic embrace of abstraction as a vehicle for articulating feminist concerns.

—Sarah Parrish

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Julia Feyrer, exhibition view of *Alternatives and Opportunities* at Catriona Jeffries, 2012 [courtesy of the artist and Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver]; Carrie Moyer, *Flamethrower*, 2010, acrylic, and glitter on canvas, 72 x 72 inches [courtesy of the artist and CANADA, New York]