

# PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY

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## Art in America

The World's Premier Art Magazine

July 2002

### **Markus Linnenbrink at Margaret Thatcher Projects**

By Jonathan Goodman

Markus Linnenbrink, a German artist in his early 40s, has become known for creating installation-sized paintings on walls and floors, as well as for more traditional works on canvas. He almost always favors stripes, whose hues blend and comment on each other. For this show, *The Wall* (2002) enveloped the small gallery's space with stripes of intense color, ranging from yellow to black - more or less the entire spectrum. Working with dry pigment, water and an acrylic binder, Linnenbrink intentionally undercut his geometric idiom by overloading the paintbrush so that drips ran from one horizontal band of color to the next. There was a beautiful glow to the work: the hues seemed lit from within. Linnenbrink has likened the experience of his installations to walking into a painting, and rightly so.

A painter who chooses to work directly on walls is denied the supple resilience and clearly demarked boundaries of traditional canvas, but something else is gained: a connection with the physical space of the room itself, a dialogue between painting and architecture. In this sense, Linnenbrink's wall piece is conceptually stimulating for its connection to a specific space, for its emphasis on physical reality rather than the illusion of depth once so common in painting.

It is interesting to compare Linnenbrink's environmental painting with one of his works on canvas, *Littlelowlight* (2001), which is striped vertically and is covered over with thick resin. The colors, which include bright greens and pinks, are beautiful, and the painting is quite successful, but it can't match the expansive power of *The Wall*.