

# PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY

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northern california art

Cornelia Schulz & Joachim Bandau @ Patricia Sweetow  
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Cornelia Schulz, "Flag Waiver", 2010, oil, acrylic, alkyd resin on canvas, 12.75 x 23

For much of her 48-year career, Cornelia Schulz has been creating paintings that combine biomorphic and hard-edged abstraction. While the organic-to-geometric ratio has varied, the energy level in her paintings has never lagged. Schulz maintains it by presenting juxtapositions of opposites side-by-side: on interlocking canvas-covered panels that are bolted together. Some are curved, others are rectilinear. Conjoined, they give off a muscular, almost kinetic energy which is counterbalanced by a darker, more brooding force.

At the heart of each picture are abstract "landscapes" built from gummy looking blobs of oil and alkyd paint. Wiped with ink to accentuate the crevasses that appear when the forms dry and shrink, these segments resemble aerial photographs seen without 3-D glasses.



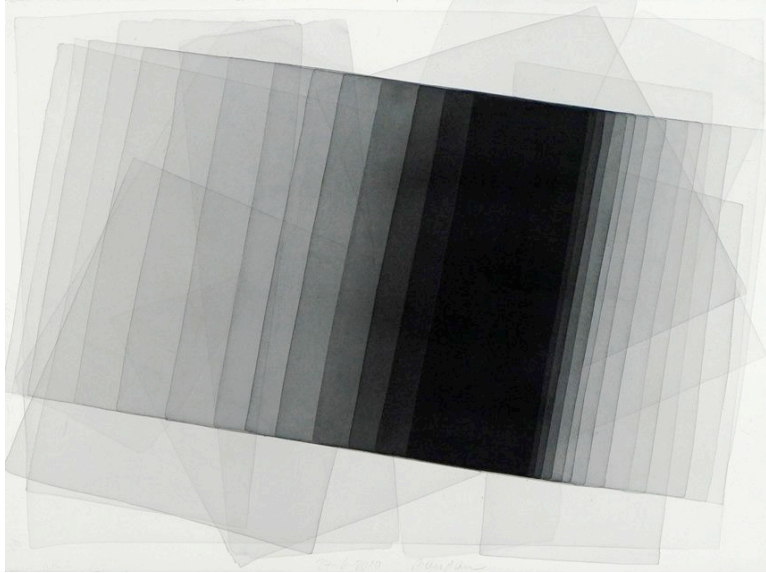
"No Right To Be Left", 2010, oil, acrylic, alkyd resin on canvas, 23 x 13.25"

These topographies – which can just as easily be read as microscopic or bodily forms – are bounded and intersected by solid-colored slabs — “runways” that are sometimes sanded to reveal subsurface layers of bright decorative patterns which appear to be inlaid, but aren’t.

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To get an idea of what these intensely worked paintings look like, imagine viewing from the air, congealed magma flows interleaved with elements of modernist architecture. Then, imagine zooming in close, into their nooks and crannies, and traversing the runways to get a more accurate fix on the spatial relationships between the opposing elements. That, essentially, is the visual dynamic that plays out in Schulz's paintings.

One obvious antecedent for this work is Frank Stella who built shaped canvases and covered them in retina-scorching colors to move painting off the wall and into three dimensions. Another forerunner is Elizabeth Murray who did the same with pop-cartoonish images set on multiple panels. Schulz's paintings are smaller in scale than either Stella's or Murray's and are therefore more intimate, but their impact can be just as zingy and just as challenging, if only for the sheer number of surfaces, corners and edges that all but push the work into an architectural realm.



Joachim Bandau, "Untitled 6-21", 2010, watercolor on paper, 22 x 30"

From the viewer, the ten pictures in this show seem to demand nothing less than a reconciliation of their meticulously plotted contradictions — contradictions that for this artist are ultimately about the properties of paint.

The minimalist watercolors of Joachim Bandau, the German sculptor with whom Schulz shares this space, achieve the seemingly impossible feat of stacking up transparent, overlapping planes to create the illusion of transmitted light, and they do so without any visible trace of a brushstroke. It's as if the artist had applied pigment to paper by gently exhaling.

—DAVID M. ROTH

Cornelia Schulz: New Paintings and Joachim Bandau: Red & Black, through Dec. 18, 2010 @ Patricia Sweetow Gallery.