

PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY

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MARKUS LINNENBRINK

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PATRICIA SWEETOW

by derek conrad murray



SAN FRANCISCO “EVERYTHINGEVERYWHEREALLTHE TIME,” Markus Linnenbrink’s latest exhibition, was an impressive showing of 17 works—many of which are a continuation of his now well-known drip paintings made of epoxy resin on wood panels. While the German artist’s color field works are distantly reminiscent of the striped canvases of Morris Louis and Gene Davis, his built-up surfaces have an exacting nature and insistent physical presence. Those qualities are enhanced in other pieces in which he reveals his process by disrupting those very surfaces.

The decadent glossy finishes of Linnenbrink’s works are enticing, but his skillful layering technique and adept use of color are the real draw. The wall panels, made from layers of resin and bright pigment, could be described as austere minimalism intersecting with

almost performative, process-oriented spontaneity. But Linnenbrink does not merely take a nostalgic journey into the history of abstraction. The object called *CHINESE DRAGON BITING ITS OWN TAIL* (2009), for example, has as much kinship to archeology as to painting. Here, the artist has applied copious layers of intensely colored resin to wood and then drilled out areas, forming deep and exquisitely chromatic concentric circles. The purposeful removal of material reveals the multicolored strata below, like an otherworldly excavation. Crowded clusters of circular shapes give the work's surface a visually complex, pockmarked appearance. The 7-foot-long

EVERYWHERE ALL THE TIME EVERYTHING (2009), a beautifully undulating floor sculpture composed of dense sheets of colored resin that were built up over time in a flexible mold, looks like a science-fiction rock formation. The only other freestanding sculpture in the show, *BUSHWICK SUPER INNUITHO THOUSE* (2008), is a 1-foot-tall minimalist block composed of layer upon layer of shiny, colorful resin, with random tiny objects, notably a Metropolitan Museum visitor button, trapped inside.

While Linnenbrink certainly looks back to formal antecedents, his unorthodox use of materials and combination of improvisation and control continues to broaden the definition of contemporary "painting."

Photo: Markus Linnenbrink: Chinesedragonbitingitsowntail, 2009, epoxy resin and pigment on wood, 20 by 46 inches; at Patricia Sweetow.