

Art Review:

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'The idea of the misusing of things is very important to us - we think this creates a lot of fun' Fischli & Weiss

MAY 2009

Should art be effortless? We assess the Idiots approach to making art

Yarisa & Kublitz Traps and mechanics - maybe it's a Swiss thing

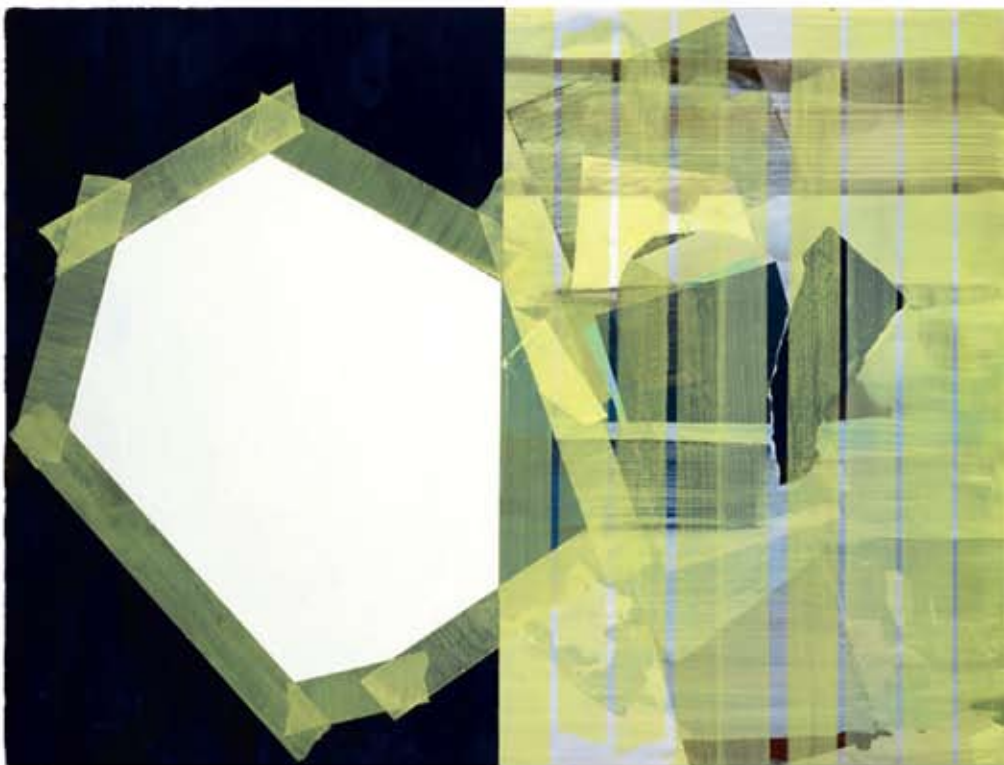
Vienna Smoking, schnitzel, bunkers and art fairs



FISCHLI & WEISS SARAH MORRIS

PLUS SHARJAH BIENNIAL DAVE HICKEY MARTIN KIPPENBERGER GEDI SIBONY
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Sigrid Sandström

The Company, Los Angeles
14 March – 18 April

Sigrid Sandström's layered, geometrically abstract paintings may owe more to landscapes and still-lives than one would give them credit for. Like landscapes, these acrylic compositions seem to impressionistically suggest vistas, outcroppings or horizons; but as still-lives, they render neat, constructivist arrangements of leftover materials: torn sheets of paper, tape, the remaining paper edges of cutout shapes, bits of wood panelling and coloured gels. That Sandström would subtly conflate two tired modes of painting could be read as a challenge to the traditional limitations of the medium, and her recent group of new paintings at the Company would certainly suggest such an approach. But it's more likely that Sandström modestly disregards such grandiose claims about painting, rather focusing her talents on clean, complex formal investigations and materialist play.

Each of Sandström's 12 new untitled works (all 2009) is composed on small boards (none larger than 45 x 60 cm) that seem appropriate for the Company's intimate gallery space. Installed approximately at eye height, these works demand to be scrutinised. In perhaps the most demanding, a painted arrangement of forms hovers over a golden underpainting that has the slapdash look of being applied with a squeegee. Small flat forms in yellow, white, grey, blue, black and brown seem to lean up against each other, cast indistinct shadows and defy gravity. Rendered prominently in the foreground, a thick, dark brown parallelogram with fuzzy white edges resembles a fragment torn from a glossy magazine. As a *trompe l'oeil* component, this painted torn fragment is so convincing that the painting could likely pass as a collage. In another slippery work, the panel is divided in half by two patterns of translucent yellowish lines. On the right, these hard-edge bars are vertically placed over a brushy white and navy-blue background. On the left, these overlapping bars define the edges of a white hexagon in a navy-blue field. These bars behave like masking tape stuck to a wall, and they are undoubtedly rendered as such. As if testing the slightest differences between two and three dimensions, Sandström adds these illusionistic elements – which could be missed entirely if not carefully inspected – to what are already very sophisticated abstractions.

Like other artists who are interested in rendering the depth and illusion of media other than paint – William Daniels, for example, who paints reproductions of famous masterworks as if they were three-dimensional cardboard constructions – Sandström relies on a certain degree of deception, but she never falls back on simple aesthetic trickery. These moves are controlled, considered and used in moderation. And with so much 'reckless' abstract painting in the world today, this restraint is most welcome. *Catherine Taft*

Untitled, 2009, acrylic on panel, 46 x 61 cm