



Art

Best in Show

'Naked!' at Paul Kasmin; Jessica Dickinson's 'Here'; 'Looking at Music: Side 2' at MOMA

By Daniel Kunitz

Tuesday, September 8th 2009 at 2:10pm

Jessica Dickinson: 'Here'

Abstract painting has been going through an identity crisis. The combination of modernist theories and mystical yearnings that spawned it early in the last century has long ago lost its generative vitality—it's a set of ideas that has been relegated to textbooks. But abstraction might just find itself again through the efforts of young artists like Jessica Dickinson, whose show "Here" largely avoids the neither-here-nor-there of pure decoration or awkward pastiche. Instead, her title points to the artist's concern with material presence in the three oils and four mixed-media works on paper in this exquisite outing. Because the paintings are made with limestone polymer, their surfaces manage to suggest texture and weight while remaining flat. For instance, the viewer seems to look down through layers of built-up pigment in *Distance-Come Closer*, in which the ghost of a robin's-egg-blue rectangle, scoured and abraded as if it had been exposed to inclement weather, hovers on a mottled grayish field. *Before-Almost*, a mostly white gouache on paper, exploits the physical, three-dimensional aspects of its material through cuts, punctures, and creases in paper. All the pieces in "Here" offer a contemplative kind of beauty that hold the viewer rooted in the moment. *James Fuentes LLC, 35 St. James Place, 212-577-1201. Through September 20*