

Art in America

JUNE/JULY 2007

Lloyd Martin at Stephen Haller

Lloyd Martin's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery continued on the theme of building. Martin constructs his paintings in layers: stains, drips, bands, bars and perfectly level lines. There is much to see within these carefully composed abstractions. The making of each work is documented in the paint, which bears incised lines and a multitude of textures. Several of the paintings resemble the sides of buildings, some more literally than others. As mentioned in the exhibition catalogue, Martin keeps a photo-journal of the neighborhood in industrial Providence, R.I., where his studio is located, and says that these paintings "are collected from observations of architectural incidents."

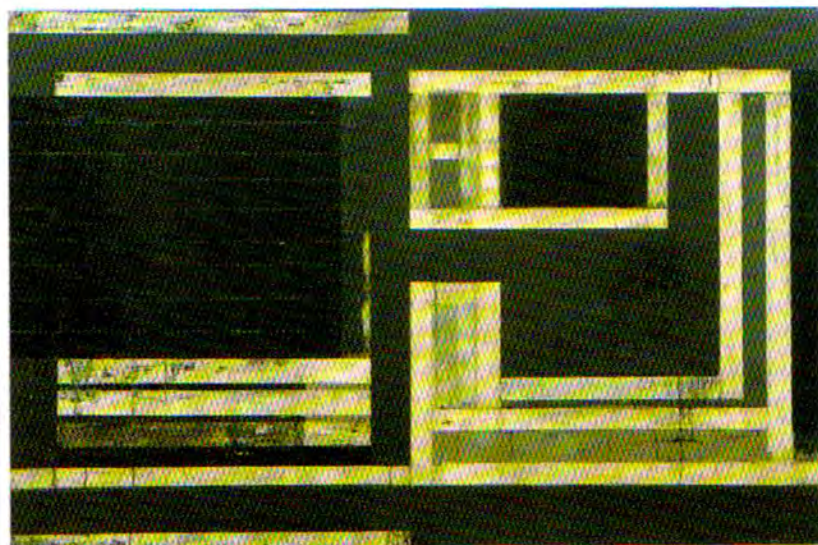
Nine of the works are from his series "Finestrae" (meaning windows) and two are from "Treden" (meaning steps); all are dated 2006 and most range from 4 to 6 feet to a side. The artist establishes a framework of vertical and horizontal bars over an off-white ground; the tonal range is narrow, the bars appearing in dark greens, browns and grays, punctuated by an occasional burst of color. The lines are overlaid with a play of drips, smudges and uneven textures that suggest age, though this weathered look is generated entirely in the studio.

There is a bit of modern-day Mondrian in Martin's work (think super-gritty, less vibrant *Broadway Boogie Woogie*), where the boxy, linear compositions lead you in and around. In *Finestrae* (21), a horizontal bar of safety-tape-yellow pigment tops

the canvas. Martin crops the work in a curious, almost playful way so that several gray boxes formed by his bars seem to fly off a whitewashed backdrop.

Perhaps the darkest and most alluring work was trapped behind the glass wall of the reception desk—it was the show's "black sheep" in the best way. Strikingly, the color scheme of *Finestrae* (19) lacks the otherwise nearly omnipresent whitewash. Deep, rich black/brown panels suggestive of steel are augmented with ocher and yellow strips that appear tobacco-stained. The colors create a brooding, complex mood.

—Tracey Hummer



Lloyd Martin: *Finestrae* (5), 2006, oil and mixed mediums on canvas, 72 by 96 inches; at Stephen Haller.

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