

SHANNON FINLEY: "Glossy Geometrics"

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Do not let size fool you, for it is in their scale where Shannon Finley's paintings carry the most weight. For his first solo exhibition at Silverman Gallery, Berlin-based Finley has produced a series of small, yet complex, brightly-hued paintings. From afar, the alternating colors and geometric patterns crack kaleidoscopes into distorted illusions of depth and movement. That's just from afar. Upon closer inspection, the picture plane of these acrylic-on-canvas paintings flattens and I'm drawn directly to the varying surface of the painting and its multitude of textures. A natural play seemingly culled from Japanese anime, video games, and the flashy thrill of frenzied carnival rides offset the seriousness of these works true maturity in their rigorous, formal considerations.

Finley routinely masks his canvas into rigid, triangular shapes and meticulously lays down delicate coats of acrylic mixed with gel medium in striking, abstract compositions. His process reveals subtle deviations in finish and texture, often accentuating the presence of the canvas itself—referential of the painting's past, yet distinctly marking its future. Certain layers appear translucent, revealing myriad compositional possibilities. Shapes and figures form and suddenly fall to the background as new outlines emerge and confront. This story of the painting takes place as Finley's polarized color spectrum runs the gamut from ecstatic and neon to saturated and subdued, characters surging and falling beyond the geometry of their plotting. His rigid compositional forms are laced with glitter and glossy finishes—a *De Stijl* for the new millennia.

The most enticing example of Finley's formal concerns on display at Silverman Gallery is a predominantly purple work titled *Undertow*, 2010. Here the artist begins to remove partially dried areas of paint before reapplying new layers of acrylic. The gossamer coverings produce intricate shifts in color and surface, nuances in color create nuances in the otherwise simple experience of looking. The work is simultaneously optically stunning as it is materially satisfying—a characteristic paintings might often lack. Finley's desire to create a hypnotic space within the gallery resonates in this collection of work. His strengths as a painter lie in his attention to materiality and referential approach to the medium. These paintings are best experienced at close range.