

SCHMIDT CONTEMPORARY ART

Yield

KRYSTEN CUNNINGHAM, JIM ISERMANN, ERIK SPEHN

HADI TABATABAI, ANNE WILSON

Curated by Dana Turkovic

APRIL 10 – MAY 9, 2009

Opening Reception: FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2009, 6pm-8pm

Schmidt Contemporary Art is pleased to announce its new exhibition: *Yield*, including artists Krysten Cunningham (Los Angeles), Jim Isermann (Los Angeles), Erik Spehn (St. Louis), Hadi Tabatabai (San Francisco), and Anne Wilson (Chicago). The artists selected create a rewarding and intensive study of color and shape; their collective warp and weft also deliver a high yield in art historical terms. In the textile industry, 'yield' is a word that helps describe the linear density of a roving of fibers. Building on this definition, Yield is a small exhibition of both complex and sometimes deadpan historical relationships in art, design and handicraft. Focused specifically on the linear quality referenced through the delicate material of thread, the work here teeters between its rigid intent and beautiful accident. Erik Spehn's textile-like paintings pull the viewer in to read his technique; a series of built up ridges made of torn strips of canvas and trills of pastel paint demand an intimacy with the viewer. His additive action is woven with an ideal geometric purity, and an abstraction tied to the trace of his hand—a representational illusion of a textile. In Jim Isermann's quilts as in hand me down modernist painting from the early to mid 90's, we get different but complimentary takes on his humorously obsessive core of abstraction. Investigating high modernism in America and its design concerns, his entirely hand-loomed fabric wall hangings, a series of simple plaid patterns using friendly color schemes, are a take on how this particular style had become ubiquitous in culture and modern life. This work is an attempt to bring popular design back into a high art context perpetuating a tradition of appropriation and migration. Moving this idea into sculpture, Krysten Cunningham's work is a posed balancing act between pedestal and spindly object. She severs ties with traditional weaving techniques by resisting its flatness and creating a series of both contemplative and structured geometric lines through three dimensional object making. Using thread, Cunningham's pivoted pure forms are created with an angularity that is sensitive to the Constructivists' objective for heightening of spatial presence through specific materials coupled with shapes recognizable in early modern furniture design. In Anne Wilson's animated threaded needles we see not only the bare elegance of non-representational sculpture but also its fragile delicacy. The frame-by-frame hand constructed double projection animation mimics how lace is constructed. Using actual needles and fibers, the work is a bustling scene of repetition and accumulation of line and shape. Experienced with a sound installation by Shawn Decker, Wilson's handcrafted animation displays aspects of imperfection, and irregularity, sharing these properties with the more traditional media in the exhibition. As both a visual and physical link, Hadi Tabatabai's small grid paintings deliver an uncanny depth of field from the shallows of three-dimensional space with his gossamer web of thread and cast shadow, exhibiting almost ethereal sensitivity to materials. An artist of Persian heritage, Tabatabai's subtle, abstract work is stripped of the ornate complexity of popular carpet design, and is loosely connected through a labor-intensive act connecting the legacy of his work to the history of carpet making as an essential part of Persian art and culture that dates back to ancient times. As is often the case with abstraction the work in this exhibition speaks for itself in its fragile simplicity and deft execution by reveling in the materials of its construction.

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