



The Jeweleigha Set

Greene Naftali Gallery

27 JUNE – 29 JULY

Julia sets, to which the title of this group show alludes, designate a certain class of fractal geometries generated from the iterations of non-linear, complex mappings. What this means is that the current show is but one more instance of an artworld grown increasingly comfortable with the rhetoric of contemporary science, particularly complexity theory, chaos and the latter's visual figuration by non-Euclidian geometries. We should remember, however, that 'mathematical repetition' and 'infinite expansion' (both phrases found in Greene Naftali's press release) are equally hallmarks of the 'grid', that old emblem of visual modernism's materialist and spiritualist schizophrenia. And given that much of the work in *The Jeweleigha Set* simply rewrites this binary in terms of the 'organic' and the 'personal' – witness Michaela Miese's *Writing* (2005) and Julie Becker's drawings (1996-2004) – it should come as no surprise that much of this new fractal formalism is marked by a familiar split personality.

Nevertheless, there are two works that escape this binary. Recalling Robert Smithson's series of Nonsites, Keith Connolly's *Qvaris Object at Dawn* (2005) displays a digital video loop of the 'Qvaris Object', a beached, diamond-shaped mirror which, over the course of 41 minutes, is slowly and hypnotically immersed by an incoming tide. With the object itself present in the gallery space, a confrontation between temporalities is staged: in the gallery, the object steps out of time to become yet one more artefact

within the aesthetic archive; while in the video, that same object is surrendered to the repetitions of the loop, which are doubled not only by the periodicity of the tide, but also by that of the day whose 'dawn' is visible concurrently on the horizon and in the object's mirror.

Similar temporal displacements are at work in *Time-Travel Project – Glenn Gould* (2005), David Dempewolf's rewiring of footage of the famous pianist playing J.S. Bach's Crab Canon. The composition, whose melodic palindrome may be performed forwards and backwards simultaneously, structures the video itself, thereby generating five different variations of Gould locked in a frenzied duet with his mirrored other. As with a normal canon, slight intervals between the entrance of each 'Gould' enhances the effects of the work's staccato (and distinctly digital) sound, while producing a unique flicker effect, which does for digital video what Tony Conrad did for film.

Perhaps the temporal boundaries staged in these two works do resonate, then, with at least one feature of the show's namesake. For the Julia sets reveal the intensive differences between convergent, periodic and chaotic states, and the resultant geometric figurations are simply ways of tracking their contours. Rather than succumb to an enthrallment with the figure itself, Connolly and Dempewolf demonstrate that interest – both mathematic and artistic – lies with an interrogation of those critical boundaries. JTDN

Fresh Paint

Lehmann Maupin

29 JUNE – 19 AUGUST

With its catchy, summer-show title, *Fresh Paint* dangles before us the tantalizing promise of emerging or undiscovered talent. It's odd, then, to encounter this cautious, rather conservative selection of work by five artists who appear already committed to well-entrenched painting discourses.

Christian Hellmich, a twenty-eight-year-old German, paints architectural subjects as if they were still lifes, each structural detail a 'surface' on which to demonstrate a different painterly effect. This handsomely executed fragmentation frustrates the cohesion of quasi-representational images, injecting a clever conceptual abstraction into otherwise prosaic scenes. However, the artist's mannered palette of greyish blues and ochres – the Neo Rauch school of colour – feels prematurely stodgy.

Angela Dufresne, a thirty-six-year-old Brooklyn-based painter, is much brasher with colour, though she sacrifices focus for audacity. One large, oil-on-canvas work depicts a massive cliff, which separates a series of linked buildings from two figures and a thin sliver of royal-blue sea. A full two thirds of the canvas is overwhelmed by this awkward black-brown cliff, forcing the eye into the narrow, more interestingly painted quadrants of the buildings and the water, both at the picture's extreme margins. It's a manipulative gambit that doesn't quite pay off. More compelling is Dufresne's 2004 *Margaret Antonioni and Catherine Pearl in Cedar Rapids, MI c. 2046*, an aerial view of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, painted – china-like – entirely in red and varying shades of lilac.

Paris-based Fabien Rigobert contributes two, single-channel videos, each presenting a group of four figures (two male, two female) in formal portrait arrangements that occasionally come to life. The upscale one is a modish sitting room adorned by natty figures that morph into new positions against a backdrop of Op-art wallpaper. The other is a campfire surrounded by casually dressed figures on a sofa, a bench and a wheelchair; their slight movements are more naturalistic and enact a spare narrative. As a trend, it's interesting to see how flat-screen monitors – if not responsible for inventing – have certainly promulgated the discussion of video in painting terms. In Rigobert's case, the videos go one better than painting by capturing the active interstices between frozen poses.

David Deutsch is the elder painter in the group, and his work duly displays an assurance that the others lack. What Elizabeth Peyton does for bodies, Deutsch does for buildings in three, medium-sized oil-on-canvas works. His loose, light touch sparingly paints only what is necessary (and not a brushstroke more) to evoke architectural forms, setting and mood. The effect is a floating, wistful sort of perception that translates visually and emotionally – a quality helped by titles like *Blue Smoke* (trailer homes and a car; 2003) and *Rodeo* (a pink-tinted façade and trees; 2005).

Lastly, Steven Black's *2005.01 & 2005.02* diptych depicts the same female figure isolated in roughly the same pose against a white ground. There is the faintest suggestion of an architectural setting indicated by a few brushstrokes of white paint. The doubled figure, by contrast, is painstakingly rendered in heavily painted oils. This hyperselfconsciousness – evinced in a laboured preoccupation with the materials and formal mechanics of painting – characterizes much of the not-so *Fresh Paint*. JE

Top
David Dempewolf *Time-Travel Project – Glenn Gould*, 2005, digital video, installation, dimensions variable
COURTESY GREENE NAFTALI GALLERY, NEW YORK

Right
David Deutsch *Blue Smoke*, 2003, oil on canvas, 48 x 81 cm
COURTESY LEHMANN MAUPIN, NEW YORK



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