

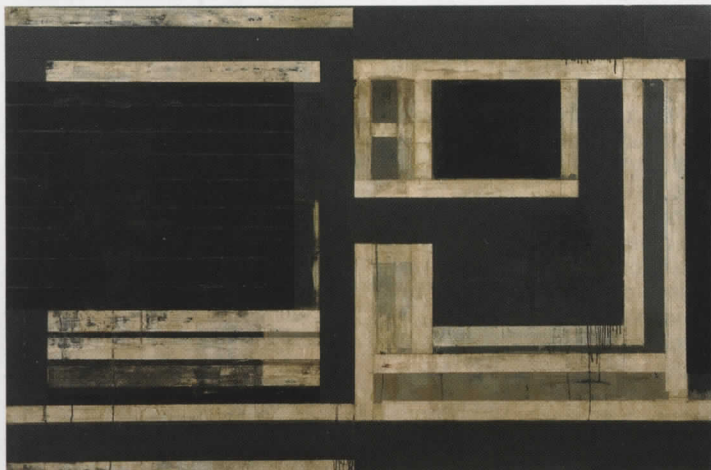
the canvas. Martin crops the work in a curious, almost playful way so that several gray boxes formed by his bars seem to fly off a whitewashed backdrop.

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 ochre and yellow strips that appear tobacco-stained. The colors create a brooding, complex mood.

—Tracey Hummer

Bill Jensen at Cheim & Read

Four blackish paintings of recent vintage headlined this show of work by veteran New York painter Bill Jensen, occupying



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

the space opposite the gallery's entrance. Like the other 21 paintings shown, they are oil on linen, vertical and smallish—most under 40 inches tall. These four, containing glossy rivulets of true black as well as passages of iridescent browns and near-blacks the color of dried prunes, convey a sense of cavernous space, simultaneously expansive and contained. Their murky accretions suggest the oddly disjunctive space in the contrast of absorbed and reflected light. Drooping clusters of brushy ovoids are barely discernible through the gloom. The viewer might be spelunking by candlelight.

In the gallery's larger space, chroma was amped way up, the painterly touch turgid and jittery.

Swirling, layered mark-making was simultaneously evident and veiled—vigorous and vigorously qualified. Jensen works with a formulation of paint medium that gives him a matte, dry-looking surface; his hothouse palette and the absence of oil's familiar, disembodying sheen make these pictures feel claustrophobically dense. Too many, like *Bacchus* and *Bog* (both 2004-06), rely on a scraping technique by virtue of which the residue of the most recent paint application merges optically and inevitably with the brushstrokes underneath. This trick complicates space by flattening it. Others, like *Luohan X* (2005) and *Luohan VII* (2003-04), are two-color paintings buoyed by calligraphic or horticultural references. As superficially attractive as these canvases are, they hedge the artist's bets—on compositional irresolution or coloristic bluntness—by sticking to a small,

and tar; *Heaven's Hole* (2003-2004), a shadowy, inchoate entanglement of curlicues, almost looks abandoned. Splitting the difference between these somber works and the eager chroma elsewhere is *Luohan Landscape* (2003-06). The squeegeed, putty-colored scrim that conceals the bottom half of the painting seems formed by an act of will rather than habit, and the radiant hues of the upper section are sullied by the glaring presence of pure white. Even on repeated visits, the best part of viewing the show was taking one last look at those black paintings, which simmer rather than boil.

—Stephen Maine

Junko Yoda at Zabriskie

The view out of an airplane window while flying high over New York State's Finger Lakes some years ago inspired veteran Japanese-born New York painter Junko Yoda to initiate a series of lush and sinuous abstractions that she continues to refine in the large-scale works (all 2006) featured in this exhibition.

At first glance, the 14 acrylic-on-wood paintings and works on paper resemble hazy topographical maps. The all-over compositions in subtle gradations of pink, beige, cream, white and pale green veined with thin, meandering dark lines, appear generally cool and contemplative. With the dense surfaces enlivened by delicate and carefully calibrated splatters, usually of magenta and pale green, the works seem positioned in the realm of Color Field painting, arrived at



Bill Jensen: *Luohan X*, 2005, oil on linen, 28 by 23 inches; at Cheim & Read.

via a familiar second-generation Ab-Ex route. Works such as *River Source #3* and *River Source #4*, for example, with pale pink grounds punctuated here and there with poignant splashes of Prussian blue and green, recall certain works by Sam Francis in their tightly controlled gestures. And the gentle optical effect of flickering surfaces that Yoda achieves contributes to the meditative demeanor of the paintings.

The excitement of the work,

Junko Yoda: *River Flow (Alaska)*, 2006, acrylic, rice paper and charcoal on wood panel, 60 by 48 inches; at Zabriskie.

