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Pat Passlof at Elizabeth Harris

Pat Passlof has recently worked in abstract and figurative modes with equal conviction, the common elements being the suggestion of allegory and her longstanding investment in the pleasures of the loaded brush. In this show of 18 recent paintings, all but a few were based on that dour emblem of modernist abstraction, the grid. The checkerboards of alternately horizontal and vertical stripes—lines that are also shapes—are not really gestural, as the paint is applied quite deliberately. Their emotional range comes, rather, from the relative prominence of one hue among a restricted number of colors, as well as a variety of touch that, while masterful, remains experimental, even playful.

In many works, the paint is



Pat Passlof: *Eighth House #1*, 2003, oil on linen, 36 inches square; at Elizabeth Harris.

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applied thickly but so deftly that the white weave of the linen ground shows through, making for a shimmering, miragelike appearance. Wavy marks lend a greasy tremolo to *Eighth House #21* (30 by 20 inches, 2003; all works oil on linen); its wet-into-wet technique produces gradations of gray-blacks, terra-cotta reddish streaks and delicate gray-pinks. The paint is laid on like bacon, and seems to hover somewhere this side of the picture plane.

The same device animates *Eighth House #8* (30 by 20 inches, 2003), in concert with the rosy tints that qualify the painting's dominant ocher and mint green.

A gauzy diaphanousness is pleas-

Leffingwell

antly at odds with the highly structured composition. *Eighth House #1* (36 by 36 inches, 2003) is destabilized differently; its runny, roiling ochers, greens and dirty grays seem to protest their compartmentalized confinement.

The grid arrangement reaches an advanced stage of dissolution in the sad, lovely *Eighth House #5* (20 by 30 inches, 2003) in which an earthy green field, flecked with orange, underlies bluish-gray smudges ethereal as steam. But *Eighth House #4* (40 by 30 inches, 2004) has been worked to the point where the densely painted surface congeals, hiding the primed linen completely. Here the figure/ground relationship is unequivocal; ruddy orange bars smolder against somber, steely gray.

These works evoke basket weave, parquet floors and cobblestones. Other vaguely figurative paintings involving fleshy pinks and humid blues suggest bathers and the sea, but the grid paintings are the main event and, in their broad patterning, question at what point a proliferation of regular breaks in the visual field yields another category of field. The works bear some resemblance to those of Sean Scully, but even while Scully's slabs of color vie for visual dominance, individually they remain as intractable as bricks. Passlof's seem not yet fixed, capable of continuing to mutate before our eyes.

—Stephen Maine

Greg Parker at Jim Kempner

Greg Parker's highly crafted paintings consist of 30 to 50 smoothed and sanded coats of oil, graphite and pigment layered over gessoed wood. He works in subdued tones, organizing his compositions into mathematically calculated areas of muted color. In one work (all are untitled) from 2005, Parker has constructed stable volumetric relationships by divid-

Greg Parker: *Untitled*, 2005, oil, graphite a

