

The figures of Hopper's *Nighthawks* (1942) disappear in Morris's spare recasting, *9th St. Café* (2003-04), an interior with a circular counter and red stools. An empty coffee cup and a clock inhabit a room flooded with light. The encaustic-on-wood *Flag* (2004) alludes in medium and title to Jasper Johns's *Flag* (1954-55); the titular subject hangs in the corner of a room, a wedge of light falling across its surface conveying the threat of the fires burning outside an open window. Multiply referential in their imagery, these paintings address history and its loss. They are also, and characteristically, concerned with the handling of a difficult, sensuous medium, here troweled, curdled and repetitively fanned across distinct passages. It may be that Morris's interest in these matters derives to a significant extent from his earlier Minimalist exhibitions, in which carefully sited works engender a play of light and shadow that survives in occasional reinstallations and in documentary photographs.

—Edward Leffingwell

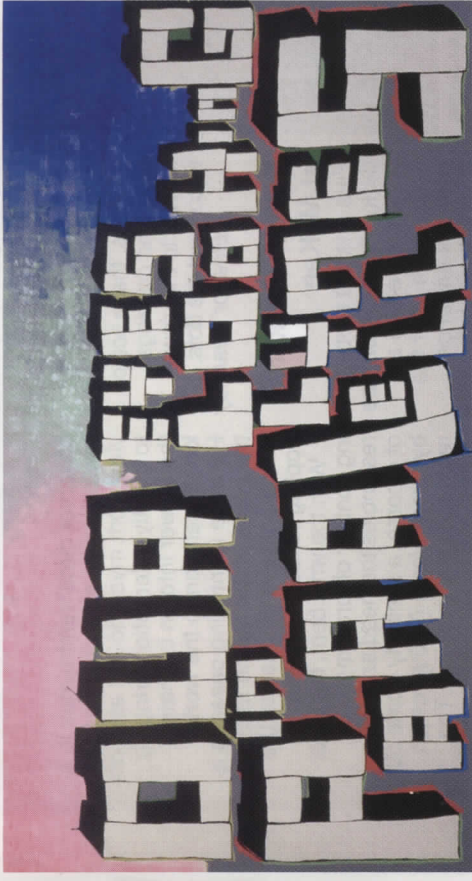
Monique Prieto at Cheim & Read

In departing abruptly from the vocabulary of abutting, eccentric shapes for which she is known, Monique Prieto has apparently decided that it is time for a change, and it is not hard to agree. Likeable enough, the earlier work consisted of animated, rambling or bunched forms, each in a single, usually chipper hue, looming over, sliding up to or otherwise engaging one another in a stridently flat, airless space. These shapes were drawn on a computer and transferred to canvas but had less to do with software than with hardware, as Prieto found drawing with a computer mouse

a useful procedure. The artist deserves credit for acknowledging that the results, based on a process that might be endlessly repeated, were growing stale.

Establishing contours and filling in colors resembles the sign-painter's technique, and the artist's new paintings are, in fact, text-based. Acrylic-on-canvas and dated 2005, they feature evocative phrases lifted from the diaries of Samuel Pepys, the ambitious 17th-century English bureaucrat and naval administrator whose descriptions of governmental machinations and the minutiae of daily life are uncommonly vivid. Rendered in clunky letters, as if made of rough blocks or slabs varying widely in size, the words are given a rudimentary illusion of depth by means of black borders at the top and right of each character. There is a little conceptual sizzle in the realization that the shapes constituting the letters—the ostensible subject of the painting—are the only untouched areas of canvas. The traces of paint clinging to the letterforms sometimes read as candy-colored mortar, sometimes like an aura that acts as visual liaison between them and the expansive ground colors.

In the 6-by-11-foot *walking*, the phrase "WALKING BOTH FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS" lurches across the canvas in three lines, the characters jostling for position within the confines of the canvas's edges in a manner reminiscent of the earlier, abstract work. The cerulean-lined, orange-yellow ground suggests a legal pad, and the letters are haphazardly outlined in the same cerulean, magenta, ochre and a beautiful, warm gray. That same gray grounds another painting, *our eyes*, the largest work in the show at 6 by 13 feet.



Monique Prieto: *our eyes*, 2005, acrylic on canvas, 72 by 132 inches; at Cheim & Read.

Here, Prieto uncharacteristically blends colors, albeit with a roller; the skylike upper region, looming over "OUR EYES LOOKING IN PARALELL LYNES," shifts haltingly, left to right, from hot pink through mint green to ultramarine. The passage leaps out amid the graphically bold but materially timid paint-handling seen elsewhere in the show, and may signal a far more significant transition in the artist's work than the co-opting of text.

—Stephen Maine

David Diaio at Postmasters

David Diaio's concern for the modernist residence as endangered species is the central theme in his recent exhibition, "Demolished/At Risk," in which he lists a number of examples of domestic modern architecture in New Canaan, Conn., that have been destroyed or are thought to be endangered. Among them are designs by Marcel Breuer, Eliot Noyes, Howard Barnstone, Landis Gores and John Johansen. While Diaio identifies Philip Johnson's Glass House as beyond the compass of that list, he

the blueprint is surmounted by a reductive silkscreen of the same arrangement. The right panel repeats that diagram in diminished sizes on a red ground, a schematic visualization of the furniture's placement subject to the reduced size of a rug after cleaning alluded to in the title. While the furnishings are unchanged in size, they are placed in increased proximity. In *Sitting in the Glass House 1* (acrylic and silkscreen on canvas, 2005), Diaio incorporates a photographic image of himself on site, at ease on one of the Barcelona chairs.

In *Figure/Ground* (2004-05), a large photograph back-mounted to Plexiglas, Diaio extends the specter of the Glass House's demise by altering the photograph. He cuts away every part of the image that contains a built element—the furnishings, structural steel framing, an Eile Nadelman sculpture—retaining only the verdant landscape, as though the house and all it contains have disappeared. In the 7-by-9-foot *Endangered Species #2* (2004) Diaio further contemplates architecture's loss in a replicated blueprint depicting modernist residences built in New Canaan in