

ARTnews

reviews: new york

Elliott Green

D'Amelio Terras

Rarely have I derived so much pleasure and stimulation from seven small paintings in one small gallery space as I did from this show of Elliott Green's work. It's not that he did anything particularly new in these oil-on-linen paintings; he simply allowed the pictures themselves to suggest their development and conclusion. To this extent he can be considered a painter's painter—like Howard Hodgkin, Tom Nozkowski, or Amy Sillman (with whom he has collaborated), all of whose pictures were hinted at here.

Green puts himself in the tradition of Arshile Gorky, and he does achieve a similarly exciting interplay between biomorphic abstraction and the vestiges of sophisticated pictorial representation. In fact despite this show's title, "Personified Abstraction," Green, who writes for *ARTnews*, made his way to these highly abstracted pictures via increasingly stylized representational works. This is most obvious in pictures like *The Last Detachment* (2008), where a painterly cousin of Daffy Duck can still be discerned. But it is in pieces like *Rainbow with Eclipse* (2009), where representation is almost entirely subsumed under a graceful arrangement of nonreferential brushstrokes, that Green does his most intriguing work. This is buoyed up by the artist's distinctive color sense, which in paintings like *Pudding Shadows* (2009), embraces vivid saturations of hue at one extreme—gory reds and rich yellows—and, as more and more of the picture gets painted out, strange muddied non-colors at the other. It is reminiscent of nothing so much as a child's first experiments with a paint box and a jar filled with increasingly discolored water. That an artist of Green's sophistication and experience can evoke such a sense of freshness is a real achievement.

—Robert Ayers



Elliott Green, *Pudding Shadows*, 2009, oil on linen, 18" x 24". D'Amelio Terras.