

Under Erasure

JPW3
Lisa Alvarado
Marcia Hafif
Arnold J Kemp
Sven Loven
Olivier Mosset
Ren Light Pan
Nicolas Roggy
Rafael Sánchez
Cullen Washington
Kathleen White

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Martos Gallery is pleased to present *Under Erasure*, an exhibition of recent, non-figurative painting. The title *Under Erasure* is a reference to Derrida used by Marcia Hafif (1929-2018) in her 1978 Art Forum essay, "Beginning Again," where she considers the fraught circumstance of painting and how to move forward from it. In the essay, Hafif states:

The enterprise of painting was in question, was "under erasure." I use this term of Derrida's (2) to denote a state in which painting appeared to be no longer relevant, not quite right, and yet the only possible activity for one who has been or is a painter - an artist deriving satisfaction from painting, drawings, the ordering of space, with a sensibility directed to paint, to pencil, to materials in general. But there was no dialogue, no discourse.

It was necessary to turn inward to the means of art, the materials and techniques with which art is made. Artists still interested in painting began an analysis - or deconstruction - of painting, turning to the basic question of what painting is, not so much for the purpose of defining it as to be able to vivify it by beginning all over again. That question led to an examination of the discipline of painting, the taking apart of it as an activity; it led to a restatement of what we already knew along with an investigation of it in depth. We pretended in a certain way that we did not know anything about painting. We studied and rediscovered it for ourselves.

This pretending resulted in a kind of extra-consciousness, a looking in from the outside. We were no longer "involved" in painting in the sense of engagement, but now saw clearly what we were doing from an exterior position - an attitude appropriate for the interim period of work which some saw this to be.

The notion that this was the late painting was not difficult to hold. And this greater consciousness could allow parody and the easy summation of painting, including the idea that it was actually possible for its relevance to have expired. Art could merge with other disciplines - science or religion - and cease existing as an independent activity. The idea of the end of painting had been around for a long time, long before Ad Reinhardt talked about the one size, the one color.

—Marcia Hafif, "Beginning Again," *Art Forum*, 1978

The paintings in this exhibition cope with a comparable set of problems. Where Marcia Hafif moved on to her distinct style of corporeal monochrome painting after being known for hard-edged abstraction, the artists in this show similarly renounce traditional representation and locate the means of expression within the surface of the work whether that be through distinctly charged materials or deliberate process. The artists included in this exhibition are JPW3, Lisa Alvarado, Marcia Hafif, Arnold J. Kemp, Sven Loven, Olivier Mosset, Ren Light Pan, Nicolas Roggy, Rafael Sánchez, Cullen Washington, and Kathleen White.

For more information, please visit www.martosgallery.com.