

On 5 January 2017, Mary Boone Gallery will open at its Fifth Avenue location #24, an exhibition of paintings by REBECCA MORRIS, curated by Piper Marshall.

A celebrated painter whose work mines formalism, punk, and abstraction, Rebecca Morris brings an ambitious dedication to contemporary painting. With #24, Morris exhibits a constellation of paintings made between 2012 and 2016. The surface of these canvases stage confrontations between storied compositions, novel colors, and prosaic motifs. The interventions intentionally evoke association and yet, through the process of their composition, escape any one fixed meaning. The title of the show reflects the artist's interrogation of meaning; Morris has often turned to numerical titling for her paintings, favoring numbers as they refer to nothing beyond themselves.

Oil and spray paint, turpentine and sun-thickened linseed oil, are among the manifold combinations of medium that feature in Morris's work. The construction and material qualities of the varied paints inhere a contradiction to formal, abstract painting. The balanced structure of the compositions allow the constituent parts to resist forming an overall, illusory shape. The tension comes from Morris's care for the margins, which she pushes to the fore with pattern. Deploying motif, such as camouflage, allows Morris to alter the weight of the overall picture; it renders the border equivalent to the central interior space of the canvas.

Such material play extends to the paint's robustness. In work such as *Untitled* (#13-16) the thinness of the paint verges toward watercolor. The paint maintains a rigorous strength beyond the provisional because it extends across the work. A silver lattice rests on the surface of this canvas, yet it remains co-extensive with the ground beneath; here, each element is a thing not greater than the other. Morris's interest in value and placement purposely draws on issues of taste and an appreciation for unconventional beauty. The unusually tactile material, dystopian colors, and varying textures undo the tightness of modernism to yield a painting that is direct, new, and unpretentious. The color here is specific – it imparts affect, yet the forms are open, allowing viewers to come to the work with their own associations. As a constellation, these works give way to a field of painting which is both flat and dimensional, confident and cool, and which wittingly deflects hierarchy (read: patriarchy).

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