

Press Release

Rebecca Morris
Shards and Skywindows

May 2 – June 20, 2009
Opening: Friday, May 1, 6 – 9 pm
Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11 am – 6 pm

With *Shards and Skywindows* Galerie Barbara Weiss is pleased to present the most recent body of work and at the same time its second solo exhibition by the Los Angeles-based American painter Rebecca Morris (*1969 in Honolulu).

Up to now Rebecca Morris has been primarily known in the US. In 2008 she was awarded a *John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship* and in 2005 she had a solo survey exhibition at the prestigious Renaissance Society in Chicago and has exhibited regularly for many years. Her work represents a confrontation of cool formalism with a strikingly able and gestural use of colour and material, which she applies in a wide variety of techniques, styles and structures – always from above – to the horizontal canvas.

Rebecca Morris's artistic practice and its results – abstract paintings of the most differing kind – do not correspond to a literal or even strategically implemented accumulation of clear art-historical references as the viewer is tempted to read them.

They show rather the various stages and expression of a continual, non-dogmatic, open painterly experiment – in accordance with the central point of her *Manifesto (For Abstractionists and Friends of the Non-Objective)*: "ABSTRACTION FOREVER!" (2004/5).

The works in Rebecca Morris's exhibition *Shards and Skywindows* appear to be conceived according to two differing principles: delicate, gesturally sprayed images encounter those with a massive, formally clear, often multilayered application of paint, although these different strategies also merge into one another in individual works. The concept of the shard that the artist brings into play in the exhibition title is also visualised through her compositional elements, which sometimes come together into a new unity like a completed jigsaw puzzle, but can also hover as single clusters before an indeterminate space. Morris regulates and controls the unquiet state of her "shards" through the use of particular chromatic systems and rhythm or by setting up framing lines, which often look soldered, or notional axes of symmetry. This gives some of the pieces the effect of collages or of individual images that have been "welded together" or interleaved. Others, though, have the distinct character of mandalas.

Morris's second title concept, *Skywindows*, refers beyond the word's literal meaning and points in the direction of metaphor and interpretation. Here Rebecca Morris reclaims and reactivates the idea of painting as a medium that conveys insight into an endless universe beyond known dimensions, and in doing so transmits an idea that became familiar to us at the very latest with the abstract expressionists.

But by deliberately not giving her works "speaking" titles and simply numbering and dating them, she leaves the terrain of interpretation solely to the viewer, whom she directly challenges to make a judgement of taste through her spirited sense of colour, her multifarious, never figurative formal repertoire and her highly idiosyncratic stance.

Barbara Buchmaier