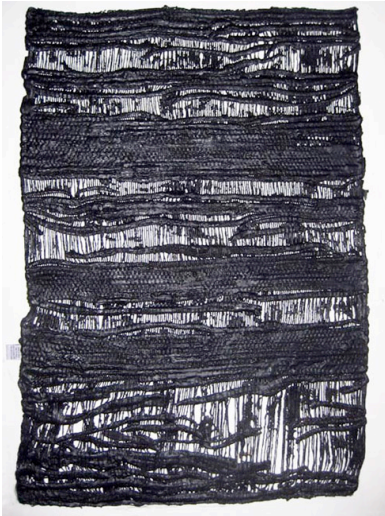


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Sam Moyer Pulls The Rug Out
by Alex Gartenfeld 01/08/10



Sam Moyer's studio occupies the basement below the Williamsburg apartment she shares with her boyfriend, artist Eddie Martinez. Each day she descends the stairs to her studio to work, a process journey has involved rugs purchased from Ikea, the fabric of which Moyer picks them from its weave to create various abstractions and patterns. The process is like drawing, or etching in the ground of the cheap carpet. When she's satisfied with her plucking, Moyer heats encaustic on a frying pan and brushes it onto the composition. She applies the encaustic until the rug is sturdy but flexible; hung in box-frames, they hang slightly off the wall and cast shadows like outsized cobwebs.

Moyer's is a procedure that re-interprets the myth of Penelepe weaving and unweaving by way of a neurotic suburban housewife of limited domestic resources. There's not so much heroism in the artist's daily routine as there is a concerted attention to the sustained but idiosyncratic system of hand labor. Moyer's simplified studio practice is embedded in the texture of the rugs, which are fragile in their substantial gaps but rather rubbery, even lubricated, in their appearance. The overwhelming sense of the objects is one of encasement. Doubling as a monochromatic canvas, the rug becomes a durable but contingent container for a type of dumb, practiced expressionism.

In many of Moyer's objects one gets the feeling that the artist is working backwards, generally from the polish and esteem of the context of artistic display toward the artist's studio. For her contribution to "Between Spaces," a series of solo presentations currently at P.S.1, Moyer shows mattress leaned against the wall to shelter fluorescent lights. The juxtaposition of textures involved in the installation draws out the banality of the fluorescent, whose established place in the Minimalist elevates its sharp, unhealthy pallor. No such luck for the mattress, which remains the unwieldy site of domesticity and repose.

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