

rachel uffner

ARTFORUM

Roger White

RACHEL UFFNER GALLERY

47 Orchard Street

October 29–December 19

Roger White's recent paintings use patterns, and in the process become them. As a mode of abstraction, patterns for White are not only repeating motifs but also functional models or plans that operate within individual works and between pictures. Yet they are also never finished (or else they are endlessly reproducible), a quality that serves the artist as a metaphor for the labor of painting itself.

The central group of works in this show derive from observational sketches of everyday objects. The "original" drawings are not on view, but their genetic progeny create a puzzle of translations from one medium to another. Gestures and shapes mutate across six large oils and three smaller watercolors. The evolutionary chronology of the works is impossible to discern, pointing to serial variations mediated by scale, materials, and the artist's own ability to manipulate them. The delicately worked surfaces and subtle gradations of color index White's meticulous—sometimes tedious—process. In the diffusion of image and mark, each picture becomes redolent (of things in the world and other pictures) without being referential.

For a suite of smaller works on paper, White has used handmade stencils and airbrushed color on paper to approach the problem in a different way. These pictures of sunsets and cast shadows make hazy allusions to art history, particularly Romanticism and Pop, and to the tangled relationship between abstraction and kitsch. Up close, the soft-focus outlines and mesmerizing palette of hazy blues and yellows dissolve into mechanical evenness, and the technical apparatus becomes apparent. The regularity of the surface weaves together the shifting patterns of light and dark—and, as implied by the mix of sun and shadows, and commercial and fine art—into a field of shimmering color.

— Megan Heuer



Roger White, *Untitled*, 2010, oil on canvas, 60 x 40"

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