

# rachel uffner

## ARTFORUM

“Le Tableau”

CHEIM & READ

June 23–September 2, 2010

Conceived by artist and curator Joe Fyfe as an antidote to the dominance of New York School abstraction in accounts of mid-twentieth-century painting, this exhibition argues for the continuing relevance of an unruly, dirtier, and at times assaultive Paris School. As such, the show does not hunt the medium of painting back to its essence, à la Clement Greenberg, so much as probe fault lines. More to the point, this diverse selection of artists working in Paris and New York from the 1950s until today has a general concern with attacking the pictorial surface by making its materiality apparent. Jean-Paul Riopelle cakes on paint, Jean Fautrier trowels it like plaster, Bianca Beck whittles and chips at the support, and Sarah Rapson takes six bowed vertical canvas panels with irregular surfaces and lines them up together to form a piecemeal sexpartite painting.

Other paintings have within their spontaneously worked veneers subliminal structural devices. Louise Fishman’s gestural marks loosely hew to an underlying pattern of a rectangle that expands from a flash of bright red in the upper left-hand corner, which is then balanced by a patch of dark green in the opposite corner. The long piano key-shaped strokes at the bottom of Joan Mitchell’s *Untitled*, 1977, work like ballast or a predella that orients the painting to the pull of gravity and links it to the floor. Finally, Bernard Piffaretti’s alternation between blurred and tightly ruled paint application imparts a sense of the options one has when handling paint. Curiously, it also creates a stop-and-go illusion, a sensation of acceleration and sudden braking.

— James Glisson

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