

# rachel uffner



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## Review: Bianca Beck, "Body"

*A young artist finds her inspiration in midcentury painting.*

By Nana Asfour



Working simultaneously with a brush and some sort of blunt instrument, Bianca Beck, 32, seems as hell-bent on defacing compelling images as she is on creating them. As part of a new generation of young artists influenced by postwar the recent "Le Tableau" group show at Cheim & Read, curated by Joe Fyfe, which aimed to showcase the affinities between Beck and her counterparts and certain midcentury Continental abstractionists.

Indeed, her first solo show confirms that she's soaked up all the works by Art Informel's main protagonists, namely Jean Fautrier, Henri Michaux, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Lucio Fontana and Wols (né Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze). And yet, while Beck has patently assimilated their styles—working mostly in an earthly palette lacerated with scratches and slashes—she abjures the intuition and spontaneity that were such hallmarks of Europe's equivalent to Abstract Expressionism. Instead, her art is suffused with a conscientious, almost existentialist, intent. In nearly every one of the small paintings and wooden sculptures on view, Beck demands our undivided attention to her own bodily imprint on the object, and in turn, to that object's corporeal transformation.

This is most prominently demonstrated in the sea of scorched brown featured in one of the several untitled canvases here, in which Beck has burnt, punched and punctured the surface, leaving two prominent holes, one on top of the other. The bottom hole, encircled by dabs of white paints, recalls motifs from Fontana's "Concetto Spaziale" paintings, but here, the result is reminiscent of female genitalia. Dark, furious and physical, Beck's work pays homage to its forbearers, even as the artist European art, she was included in audaciously—but assuredly—takes their language as her own.

Rachel Uffner Gallery  
170 Suffolk Street  
New York, NY 10002

+1 212 274 0064  
info@racheluffnergallery.com  
racheluffnergallery.com