

Sam Moyer: 'More Weight'

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Rachel Uffner Gallery

Art in Review

170 Suffolk Street, near Houston Street,
Lower East Side

By ROBERTA
SMITH

Through June 8

Sam Moyer's 2012 show at this gallery was an improvement over her 2010 debut there. Her third takes ever greater strides, partly by making smart use of the three spaces in the gallery's new, much larger location.

While Ms. Moyer previously concentrated on bleach applied to canvas soaked in black paint, multiple media are used here. Closely hung in the gallery's wide opening is a series of large works that layer reverse-glass painting, painted fabric or plexiglass into various sandwiches. In the upstairs gallery, 10 smaller paintings consist of irregular slabs of found marble paired with panels of painted canvas that repeat or counter the various veining patterns and colors of the slabs, sometimes to the point of trompe l'oeil. Both series use — and deny — the artist's touch and decision-making process in impressive ways, combining slick and matte, found and made, and daring us to see them as paintings. But while handsome and impressively varied, the visual results remain familiar. And marble-canvas paintings verge on gimmicky.

Ms. Moyer, who has made painting-related sculpture in the past, returns to it in "More Weight," a large installation that riffs incisively on Richard Serra's massive "Delineator" (1974-75) at the Museum of Modern Art. Recently on view for more than 18 months, the Serra consists of two plates of cold-rolled steel: one on the floor, the other perpendicular to it on the ceiling, perhaps dangerously defying gravity.

Ms. Moyer has responded with a thick slab of white veined marble nearly as large as the Serra that you can walk on. It is paired overhead with weightlessness: a diaphanous piece of stretched pale fabric (slightly larger than the Serra), lighted from above to accent its pale splatters and stains and its luminosity. This quiet welcoming canopy turns the marble into a magical pavilion. Walking on the thick whiteness beneath the lightness of the fabric is exhilarating.

Despite the ups and downs here, Ms. Moyer's progress is substantial. It's fitting that she titled the whole show "More Weight," after its impressive centerpiece, but she needs even more.



The centerpiece from Sam Moyer's show, "More Weight," at the Rachel Uffner Gallery. Courtesy of the artist and Rachel Uffner Gallery