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"The Painting Factory: Abstraction After Warhol," installation view, 2012, MOCA, Los Angeles



Rudolf Stingel
Untitled
 1987
 Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

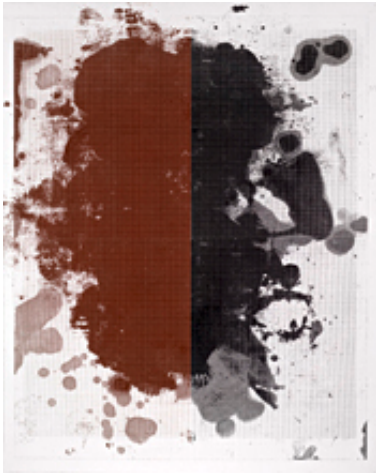
MOCA L.A. PAINTING FACTORY

by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

By now, it seems clear that the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles has become a mirror of the tastes, loyalties and passions of its director, Jeffrey Deitch. Since coming on board in 2010, he has proceeded to transform the museum into a larger, nonprofit version of Deitch Projects, the New York gallery he helmed from 1996 until he closed it to move west.

Other curators at MOCA continue to pursue various exhibitions (like "Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974," organized by Philipp Kasier and Miwon Kwon, opening May 27), but Deitch's presence is unusually dominant for a museum director. Exhibitions of Street Art, **Hedi Slimane's** photographs, Rodarte's fashions -- it all stems from Deitch and his extremely inclusive view of what constitutes contemporary art. This approach has been controversial, to say the least. Whether things go well or badly at MOCA, it is really his vision and his reputation on the line.

"The Painting Factory: Abstraction after Warhol," on view through Aug. 20, 2012, is an example of things going quite well. Deitch makes no secret of the fact that his friendship with **Andy Warhol** was a defining influence in his life. Deitch has been a fan of Warhol's abstract paintings of shadows, camouflage and Rorschach blots since first seeing them in the 1980s, when many critics were skeptical. Those paintings came to mind as he witnessed artists from the postmodern era making



Christopher Wool
Untitled
 2011
 Luhring Augustine, New York



Urs Fischer
Untitled
 2006
 photo by Mats Nordman



Kelley Walker
Black Star Press (rotated 90 degrees)
 2006
 Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

monumental abstract "paintings" without resorting to a paintbrush. The resulting exhibition is a surprisingly thought provoking and handsome affair.

The first gallery features some of the biggest and best of those non-figurative Warhols and they are given plenty of room, since Deitch had interior walls removed to expand the cramped Grand Avenue exhibition spaces. (Architect Kulapat Yantrasast consulted on the changes, and curatorial coordinator Ethel Seno helped Deitch with the show.)

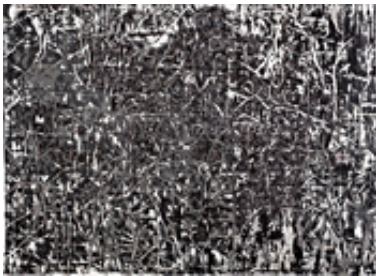
The galleries seem even lighter and larger thanks to the ivory wall-to-wall carpet installed by **Rudolf Stingel**, which becomes a "painting" by virtue of the foot prints made on it during the course of the exhibition. The canvas-colored carpet is an ideal accompaniment to Stingel's trio of 2008 silver paintings embossed with the pattern of chain link as well as a glowing silver-washed 1987 triptych. Stingel, whose manual on how to reproduce his silver paintings is reproduced and hung in another area of the exhibition, is a logical successor to Warhol.

Silkscreen technique, too, is a Warhol legacy and many of these artists use it to reproduce the effect of abstract art without the taint of emotional commitment or interiority associated with the loaded brush. A pair of Warhol's giant silkscreens of Rorschach blots hang opposite a gallery dedicated to recent work of **Christopher Wool** --silkscreened blotches and splatters of black and brown on a massive scale. **Urs Fischer's** ten-by-twelve-foot silkscreens of super-enlarged patterns of dust read as blobs and smears of black on white.

Kelley Walker uses enlarged digital prints of a Black Star Press photograph of a uniformed white policeman grabbing a black man. The image recalls the civil rights photos used by Warhol and Walker also repeats the same image but presents it on its side and obscures it by silkscreening smears of white and dark chocolate over the surface. The incendiary appropriated texts used by **Glenn Ligon** are silkscreened and layered with thick coal dust until they lose legibility and are read instead as black abstract marks coalescing at times as monochomes.



Glenn Ligon
Figure #14
 2009
 collection of Joyce and Michael
 Ostin



Mark Bradford
Ghost and Stooges
 2011
 Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York



Mark Bradford
Untitled
 2011
 Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York

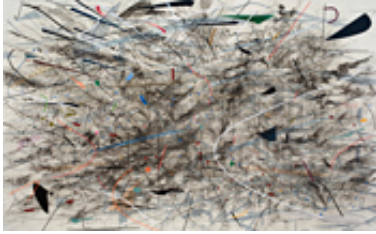
Artists have found other inventive ways to make paintings without a brush. **Mark Bradford** emerges once more as a great talent with a pair of massive works plastered in collaged material, in one case old circus posters, which were then ground down with an electronic sander into patterns and grids. A pair of **Julie Mehretu's** explosive compositions, *Black City* (2005) and *Black City* (2007), were concocted from soft ware, architectural renderings and other techniques. **Sterling Ruby** spray painted his expansive horizontal canvases *SP181* and *SP 185* in a rudimentary fashion so glimmers of color emerge beneath the penumbral surface.

The show is multi-generational, with Warhol as godfather to children of the 1960s and the 1980s. **Taub Auerbach** painted monochromes that shimmer like iridescent curtains. Das Institute, a collaborative endeavor by **Kerstin Brätsch** and Adele Roder, produced crazily romantic and wildly colored abstractions, using a range of means to add a burst of irreverent energy.

Many of the artists in this show are friends or associates who have worked together and own one another's work. **Wade Guyton** has collaborated with Walker, for instance, but for this show contributed a monumental series of vertical white panels with the top portion of each covered in black ink. With references to geometric painting, they were produced with ink jet printers.

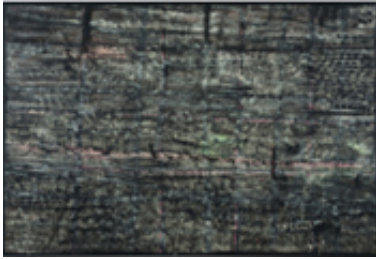
Working with a wide variety of printing mechanisms to simulate the effect of abstract painting clearly is a collective concern of all the artists, the legacy of ideas rooted not in Pop but in Conceptual art. In fact, the catalogue, which will be published in June, is something of a hodgepodge of writings, informed as well as constrained by the art speak of the 1980s, including a piece on Warhol by Rosalind Krauss. Nonetheless, the exhibition provides a heavy dose of esthetic as well as intellectual pleasure, tracking artists continuing interest in abstract painting, even without a paint brush.

"The Painting Factory: Abstraction after Warhol,"
 Apr. 29- Aug. 20, 2012, Museum of Contemporary
 Art, Los Angeles, 250 South Grand Avenue, Los
 Angeles, Cali. 90012.



Julie Mehretu
Black City
2007
Marian Goodman Gallery, New
York

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Sterling Ruby
SP 181
2011