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2013.03.22 Fri, by Daniel Szehin Ho

Sensual Monsters

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“Sacred Masters, Sacred Monsters: Denizens of the Demonic Demagogue,” Solo exhibition by Jason Martin.

Pearl Lam Galleries Hong Kong (6/F, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong). Mar 15, 2013 – Apr 10, 2013

“Lush,” “sensual,” and “gleaming” come to mind when looking at Jason Martin’s paintings. The artist very physically molds these turbulent, whirly surfaces with his hands, creating gestural forms that blur the distinction between the pictorial and the sculptural all the while highlighting the primacy of the medium itself. Whatever one sees in these wavy forms — glimpses of oceans and of rock formations or else visions of dreamscapes — what is also clear is that they forefront the traces of the temporal and the expressive presence of the artist

Or is it all gesture? After all, the color is applied at the end, and the artist candidly admits there is little direct relationship between the color and the titles (in this case, dictators from around the world, though curiously not from China — one can only wonder at this lapse). Indeed, color appears to be an afterthought. At times, Martin’s work can appear to veer into an almost-calligraphic practice, if one desires such a (mis)interpretation, but the artist himself is more concerned with the dialogue with the story of painting — the story of the line and of the trace, of the expression of the ephemeral, of the purity of forms. In reducing expression to color, shape, and texture, Martin’s paintings are engaged with the lineage of expressionist techniques and sensorial expressions.



See all photos (16)





Jason Martin, "Rojas" pure pigment on aluminium, 96 x 78 cm, 2012.

Martin's search for purity and essence as well as his very modernist conceptions of the primitive feel a bit like outdated attempts at unmediated expression. In some ways, the pure pigments can even feel too "loud" while his very technically accomplished, attractively crowd-pleasing works sit in an Expressionist cul-de-sac (Rothko with a finish fetish?). Down-to-earth and personable, the artist readily admits his works are not "really contemporary" and rather modestly comments that "It's just a phase I'm going through." Not the most serious, not the most ponderous, these paintings nevertheless sit seductively, exuding charm and sensuality.



Jason Martin, "Franco," pure pigment on aluminium, 182 x 162 cm, 2012.





Jason Martin, "Tesoro (Rufino)," pure pigment on aluminium, 200 x 170 cm, 2012.

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Keywords: calligraphy, Expressionism, finish fetish, gesture, JASON MARTIN, Pearl Lam, sensual, trace,



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