

CLARA BRÖRMANN // NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY

by Tara Plath

The paintings of Berlin-based artist [Clara Brörmann](#), currently hanging on the walls of [Nicelle Beauchene Gallery](#), reveal an innate sense of clarity, though a direct understanding of each work's process may be lost in the layers. The exhibition, entitled *Der Tag davor*, includes nine recent paintings that appear to address the artist's autonomy alongside a historical context. The initial impression of the paintings, as processed based textures or formalist compositions, quickly dissolves into a glimpse of Brörmann's singular logic.



'Haben und Verlieren 2,' 2013. Oil on canvas, 78 3/4 x 59 inches. Images courtesy of: Schwarz Contemporary.

Her understanding of art-historical narratives, tied to recognizable shapes and patterns, comes in and out of focus – canonical motifs distorted by more contemporary painterly gestures. The painstakingly rendered edges of perfect geometric forms, reminiscent of Suprematism's formal pared down attitude, are diluted by the rash of activity that

surrounds them. The stripes and zig-zags in some works read like products of an unhinged Frank Stella, as though rules had been created only to be broken, rewritten, and tried again. Any linear process is made indistinguishable from its outcome – yet there is a sense that within each work, Brörmann reaches a very intentional end. While the paintings first appeared to me as a struggle between impulse and history, Brörmann maintains a sense of uniformity in her consilient compositions.



‘Schiebebild,’ 2013. Oil on canvas, 55 x 39 inches. Images courtesy of: Schwarz Contemporary.

I was immediately drawn by several of the works’ thickly applied monochromatic oil surfaces, and just as quickly disoriented by details of unprimed canvas, and carefully revealed foundations of colors. Works such as *Schiebebild* present the viewer with evidence of material stripes buried beneath directional brushstrokes of an overbearing grid on the painting’s surface. The work proceeds to step entirely outside of their final iteration by exposing uncontrolled stains and drips of bright green and red paint on the canvas’ thick edges. In others, Brörmann builds up and deconstructs her compositions using techniques of removal such as tearing and sanding. While the resulting images are varying patterns, reminiscent of woven fabrics, a detailed inspection of the surface reveals a breakdown of order. Instead, hidden behind a façade of uniformity, is the evidence of excess and a nearly manic covering, hiding, disguising, and eventually conceding of Brörmann’s will upon the canvas.



'Der Tag davor,' 2012. Oil on canvas, 55 x 39 inches. Images courtesy of: Schwarz Contemporary.

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Der Tag davor at Nicelle Beauchene Gallery runs through December 21, 2013.

Tara Plath is an artist and writer working out of Chicago, IL. She recently received a Bachelors of Fine Arts with an emphasis in sculpture and a Bachelors of Arts in Visual and Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.