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Claire Seidl at Stephen Rosenberg
by
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Claire Seidl's recent paintings mark the beginning of a decisive shift away from the reference to natural forms we are accustomed to seeing in her work. Instead we find a rapt investigation of the nature of abstract painting itself - what it means to surrender allusion, to balance the purely pictorial with the personal, and to adapt a long-developed and successful formal methodology to a changing vision.

Seidl has been heading in this direction for some time and one of the fascinating things about the current body of work is the chance it gives us to watch big, subtle changes unfold dynamically. There are rich examples here, particularly in the smaller pieces, of her familiar style - an almost airtight fabric of strokes defining perturbed, impacted abstract forms. Then, by contrast, and most often in the larger paintings, she relaxes surface inflection, simplifies her forms to arcs and spheres, and goes for a compositional "emptiness" she hasn't sought before. It is exactly this clearing out and quieting down that allows Seidl to develop the fresh vocabulary of gesture and the sense of abstraction-as-metaphor we find in these paintings. The result is the kind of formal adventure she's spoiled us into expecting from her, coupled with a new expressive harmony.