

Best in Show: Mark Morrisroe at Artists Space Plus: Jaq Chartier at Morgan Lehman

By R. C. Baker Wednesday, Mar 30 2011

Jaq Chartier: 'Slow Color'

Like a scientist growing cultures in a lab, Jaq Chartier methodically arranges her inks, stains, and dyes to interact with layers of white paint and acrylic resin on immaculately prepared wood panels. The saturated pigments bleed and seep in unexpected ways, creating a matrix that at times resembles a DNA chart. In some pieces, the technical components of her startlingly lovely compositions are carefully noted in pencil, directly on the white ground.

Her precise patterns are infused with a fluorescence that is neither science nor nature: Patches of color may fade out as they approach the edge of a panel, or a more diffuse grouping might alternate with sharply contoured hues. These compelling juxtapositions result from truly obsessive artistry. (So obsessive, in fact, that if the surfaces are not perfectly smooth or if the colors become muddy, Chartier takes the rejected panels to a dump and watches while the bulldozer's treads crush them, an exercise just crying out for a performance video.)

Like most painters, Chartier was trained to use predictable, steadfast materials, but years of experimentation have allowed her capricious elements to evolve into gorgeous mutations.

Morgan Lehman, 535 W 22nd St, 212-268-6699, morganlehmagallery.com. Through April 2