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Melissa Meyer

Esplund, Lance. "The Lighthearted Abstract Expressionist and Other New York Gallery Shows Worth Seeing." The Wallstreet Journal, February 21, 2009.

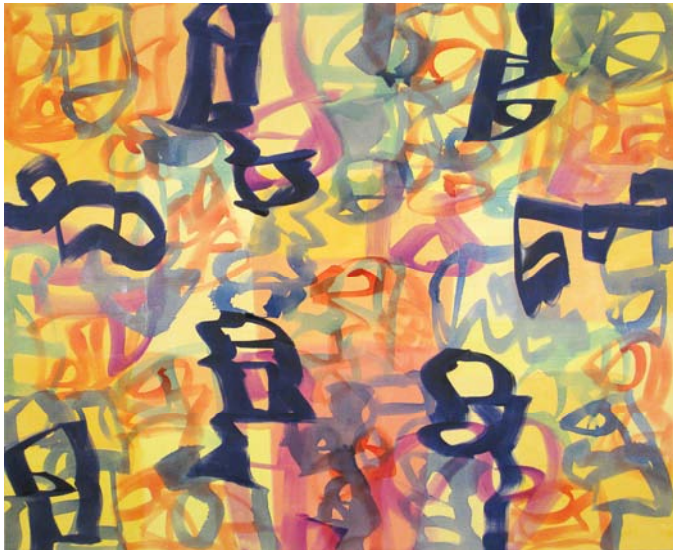
THE WALLSTREET JOURNAL

'Melissa Meyer: New Works'

Lennon, Weinberg Inc.

(514 W. 25th St.; 212-941-0012)

Through March 21



Lang, 2008, 65 x 80", Oil on canvas

Melissa Meyer is a talented, third-generation abstract expressionist, albeit one whose paintings are lighthearted and lyrical. Imagine a painter equally enamored with Willem de Kooning and Raoul Dufy. Her first one-person exhibition at her new gallery, of nine oil paintings, a small watercolor and a monotype, is abundantly fresh and ebullient. The washy oils, which range roughly from 2 to 7 feet across, resemble, as with all of her signature work of the past several years, out-scaled watercolors. Ms. Meyer's hand is loose. She weaves heavier and darker calligraphic flourishes, somewhere between Chinese characters and Old English script, within a grid of creams, yellows, pinks and greens.

At their least-successful, this continuing series can

tend toward a decorative sameness of mark and scale, and line can feel as if it is merely sitting on top and separate from, rather than interactive with, ground color. When they are good (and Ms. Meyer is getting freer and bolder, and she is making mark and color more various and clearly her own), the works suggest a range of elements -- water, fire, solid, air -- and of personality. The fusion of line and ground in this body of work creates an interplay in which linear movements become spatial arabesques. Line and color are more woven together, as if they belong to the same organism. In "Untitled 6" (2007), a linear, spring-like compression gives tension to the rectangle. "Black Crow Blues" and "Not Dark Yet" (both 2009) are blunt, earthy and faded. "Horta," "Lang" and "Tony Hunter" (all 2008), dancing, knotted webs of bright color and line, struggle between openness and restraint, air and solid. Their imminent frontality is buoyant and percussive -- somewhere between a wall of water and a wall of flame.