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Jill Moser

Hirsch, Faye "Jill Moser at Lennon, Weinberg." *Art in America*, April, 2008.

Art in America

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Jill Moser at Lennon, Weinberg

In her first exhibition at this Chelsea gallery, Jill Moser included two dozen oil paintings (2006 or '07) and two etchings (2006), abstractions all, showing her signature looping, calligraphic, indigo-blue forms suspended in whitish grounds. Emanating from cores of a denser blue, the forms—something like loosened knots—are smudged along their edges, making them appear as if they are coming in and out of focus, or as if they are in constant motion—a blur. Blue halations, ever so faint, invade the surrounding whiteness like barely perceptible puffs of exhaust. These effects serve to transform background into atmosphere and physical support into ambient illumination; the imagery is buoyed, so that in this installation of so many works, the impression was one of extreme lightness.

Yet the paintings are far from purely evanescent, forced into physicality by the confident gestures that made them, their blue forms quite various in shape and subtle in impact. However abstract, some suggest narratives in their internal transformations and, in the case where more than one form is present, their interactions. *Tryst*, for example, stages a face-off between a bar that slides in from the right like a gun barrel and, at the left, a shape that looks as if it's exploding. Seconding this bellicose theme, the form in *Swoon* somewhat resembles an automatic rifle—but clownishly, with balloonlike, roping lines descending from its "cartridge" and "barrel," and lofting it into weightless dysfunction.

As elegant as the paintings appear at first sight, after a time their activity begins to feel almost cartoonish, like late Guston drawings, but with his blocky blacks reconceived as ropy blues. Especially fine is *Circus Acts*, which—perhaps because of the loops, seemingly whipped into motion, and the taut, leashlike line rising diagonally from the lower right corner—reminded me of Giacomo Balla's famous wagging dachshund. Similarly joyous was the largest painting in the show, *It's Always Charlie Parker's Birthday* (47 by 69 inches), with its two insectlike forms vibrating away, airborne. More serene is *Liner Notes*, the title perhaps a pun, since the image is like a seascape, with what looks like a distant ship viewed through a tangle of dockside ropes.

The exhibition would have been stronger had fewer paintings been included—half of them were 30 inches square, and a certain repetitiousness resulted. These are works that yield their pleasures from long, slow scrutiny, and there need not be too many of them to convey the artist's skill in making protean a limited vocabulary.

—Faye Hirsch

Jill Moser: *Tryst*, 2007, oil on canvas, 30 inches square; at Lennon, Weinberg.

