



Nicholas Krushenick, *Battery Park*, 1965, acrylic on canvas, 84"x70", © Estate of Nicholas Krushenick, courtesy of Gary Snyder Gallery

Five from Five

A Sampling of Painting in New York City

by John Mendelsohn

How to write about painting in New York today? The answer is to talk about one painting from each of five exhibitions. This single-shot approach is an invitation to you to look further into the work of all these painters.

Nicholas Krushenick was a master of pop abstraction whose heyday began in the 1960s. His work is enjoying a well-deserved revival in a jam-packed show at the Gary Snyder Gallery. Look at *Battery Park*, with its series of framing apertures, first red and yellow, then waves of white, that open up into

a patch of pure blue. This painting is Krushenick's *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, wherein the painter, like Mondrian before him, describes in abstract terms the rhythm of the city. Comic, off-kilter, bright, and new – this is tunnel vision Gotham-style, where image is everything. The unexpected relief is the sight of sky and water at the very end of Manhattan island.

Jack Whitten is a veteran painter who is exceptional in many ways, especially in the emotional complexity of his work. Often elegiac in feeling, his beautiful and tough paintings both seduce and mystify. In *Apps for Obama* at Alexander Gray Associates, Whitten creates a secular altar piece using tesserae of cast acrylic paint to form a mosaic field of blue and white.

Breaking through this wall are colorful cast "buttons", resembling icons of apps, apparitions of magical help. There are also irregular "jems" of translucent detritus, as well as two pages, caught as they turn. At the painting's lower edge is an abstract table, making us wonder if we are looking at a particularly vivacious, prophetic translation of Da Vinci's *Last Supper*, dissolving into space.

Carrie Moyer paints a biomorphic dream world, as if imagining a collage of thin layers, a virtual mash-up of impulses and styles. Seemingly driven by the need to make feeling visible, Moyer gives us close-up, impacted images with an everything-at-once quality that is both energetic and unsettling. In *The Tiger's Wife* in her show at CANADA, lobed forms in magenta and yellow invade a dark interior space of liquid, smudged hand prints and black ovoids. This psycho-sexual cavern is flanked by raw canvas, like flesh, set off against the blue space opening beyond. Georgia O'Keefe, Miró and other modernists are evoked in a painting that desires its interiority and spectacle in equal measure.

Richard Timperio paints jazzy abstractions awash in color that is somewhere between Fiestaware of the 1950s, and color field painting of the 1960s. Primary colors play off against lime greens, hot pinks, olives and warm browns. The palette's evocation of the past is echoed in the composition of *Beta Blocker*, recently seen at Timperio's show at Art 101. Slabs of stained color fill the painting's vertical space leaving slim white reveals of unpainted canvas. Layered on top are outlines of small, freely painted eccentric frames. The overall effect is a kind of woozy good cheer, simultaneously suave and funky, like the knowing hipster, who knows that joy is where it's at.

Scott Malburn paints with a kind of religious discipline. Paintings emerges from the exercise of practice, and practice is the performance of certain orders. Within the strictures of his art, Malburn finds a vision of becoming,



Scott Malburn, *Young World*, 2011, acrylic on canvas over panel, 11"x14", courtesy of Janet Kurnatowski Gallery

with the formal motif of the chevron yielding another iteration of itself ad infinitum. In *Young World*, in the artist's show at Janet Kurnatowski Gallery, concentric diamonds of gray, black, and creamy coral orange hold within them a replicant, a chip off the old block, but turned upright. This new life, although made from the same old stuff, won't behave – it wants its space, it wants its say, and it wants it now.

Jack Whitten, *Apps for Obama*, 2011, acrylic on hollow core door, 84"x91", courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates



Carrie Moyer, *The Tiger's Wife*, 2011, acrylic on canvas, 48"x60", courtesy of CANADA



Richard Timperio, *Beta Blocker*, 2011, acrylic on canvas, 68"x49"