

Thumb Cinema

Amy Sillman at Capitain Petzel

12 January, 2012



In the glass walled gallery space of Capitain Petzel, Amy Sillman's large scale oil paintings hang with an impressive visual force. With muted hues and expressive line work that would make de Kooning proud, the artist blends the figurative and abstract with exceptional aptitude. However, the show, titled "Thumb Cinema" has pushed the subject of painting beyond the canvas into a psychological conversation that is rooted heavily in femininity, humor and the gestural mark.

Keeping with Sillman's hallmark of displaying low budget, reproducible ephemera in conjunction with her paintings, a 7-minute digital animation created on the artist's iPhone hangs side by side with the canvases. Inkjet printed stills pulled directly from the video (and sold at the cost of production of \$42 each), cover the interior of a separate second floor room. These archival prints buzz with sexual energy; the primitive finger markings are a mass of cartoonish drawings, color blocks and body parts in a compelling pop of flat, graphic, brightness that sheds the somewhat solemn character of the downstairs canvases.

The form and visual contrast of these disparate works are the perfect foil for one another. Sillman makes it clear that the corporeal relationship she sees as inherent to the process of painting is not reserved solely for the traditionally laborious, but equally as essential in the minute, the low end and the digital. This combination of high and low examines the artist's bodily relationship to her work and the painting's capacity for representation, all the while poking fun at the tropes of modernism.

by Devon Caranicas

[Image: Installation view Amy Sillman "Thumb Cinema", courtesy of Capitain Petzel]