

# DAILYSERVING

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## *Thumb Cinema* – Amy Sillman at Capitain Petzel, Berlin

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Amy Sillman, Installation View "Thumb Cinema," courtesy Capitain Petzel, 2011

[Amy Sillman's](#) new suite of paintings at [Capitain Petzel](#) are large and spatial, with an airiness well-suited to the glass paneled façade of her new Berlin gallery. Sillman's latest canvasses still have the brute gestural force of a paint-conjured "id," but also possess a kind of nimbleness and play alluded to in the exhibition's title, *Thumb Cinema*. Her palette is quiet, with lavender and forest greens evoking visions of British dales and naked Rococo picnics. A sense of solidity rarely appears in these works, replaced instead by misty shapes and raucous lines, which recall the rhythmic playfulness of Kandinsky or Mondrian.

The comic (in both senses of the word) aspects of Sillman's paintings are belied by the massive size and scope of their Abstract Expressionist roots. Sillman's work is made more powerful because it diminishes the self-seriousness of AbEx, instead extolling the sensual, personal and indulgent mark.

Sillman gestures coyly towards the monolith of man-painting by digitally altering a [Nancy cartoon](#) for her exhibition poster. In the cartoon we watch as the loveable girl scamp discovers a painter in the heady process of CREATING and then, duly impressed, offers him some (rather phallic) candy through a hole in the wall.

Although Sillman's paintings sometimes read as the residue of an instinct-driven process, she is clearly an able draftsman who investigates the immediacy of mark with informed skill, giving primacy to whatever instrument she has on hand. She underlines these corporeal interests by giving the paintings titles like *TEETH* and *MOUTH* among others.

The sensualized mark-as-body idea is made literal with three charcoal drawings that are more direct in their headless, mirrored figuration and recall Primitivist interpretations of the female form. There is a brutality to these untitled works which, when taken with the pieces downstairs form a larger historical riff on the tropes of modernism.



Amy Sillman, Installation View "Thumb Cinema," courtesy Captain Petzel, 2011

Alongside her paintings and charcoal drawings, Sillman presents a new animation titled *Pinky's Rule* along with a room full of printed stills, specified to be sold only for the price required to make them; 43 dollars. In recent shows Sillman has displayed zines, posters and CDs with her paintings, offering up a democratic gesture that implicitly contradicts the idea of painting as luxury totem.

Sillman's animation, made on her iPhone is a departure in medium if not in visual language. The stills from *Pinky's Rule* are arrayed across a back room, covering almost all of the available wall space and blanketing the viewer in double bodies, eyes and orifices, blooming and spewing with joyous pixelated abandon and completing a pleasure-centric vision that feels whole and exciting.