



Maximum Voracity

Jackie Soccoccio's retinal thought storm

by Jerry Saltz

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Many of last year's good solo shows didn't garner as much attention as they maybe deserved; among them were outings by Joyce Pensato, Benjamin Edwards, Ellen Altfest, Kate Gilmore, Stuart Hawkins, Jennifer Dalton, Guy Ben-Ner, Karen Heagle, Judith Linhares, Chris Minor, Halsey Rodman, Tommy White, Keith Mayerson, Joe Fig, Mindy Shapero, and Sara VanDerBeek. One sleeper still on view is Jackie Saccoccio's uneven, retinal thought storm of an exhibition, which brings to mind baroque ceiling swirls, floral patterns painted on Japanese vases, and iced fog, and has what Georges Bataille called an "unstoppable repugnant voracity."

Saccoccio's paintings come dangerously close to looking like mid-century abstraction, particularly the work of artists like Joan Mitchell and de Kooning. Yet if you spend time in this show, the old-school quotient subsides and sparks begin to fly.

This is partly because Saccoccio has installed a number of large fluorescent-colored paintings atop calligraphic drawings made directly on the wall. You begin to get that she is nervily trying to combine the verve of Mitchell, the analytic painting-is-part-of-the-world conceptualism of Sol LeWitt, and the hardcore graphicness of Christopher Wool.

Saccoccio is in love with painting's expansiveness. She wants to literally go beyond the confines of the canvas. Here, the walls turn into roiling landscapes and biomorphic diagrams of cities. This makes the adamantly abstract paintings feel like real occupants of this unreal, diagrammatic realm. Then the effect reverses and the paintings turn unreal and the walls reassert themselves. Paintings hung on bare walls elsewhere in the gallery become loners living off the grid. If Saccoccio rids herself of the considerable whiffs of old abstraction, she won't be a dark horse much longer.



Jackie Saccoccio: In Transparency

Dark Horse

Black & White Gallery

636 West 28th Street

Through January 16

Jackie Saccoccio's "Symphony"

Courtesy Jackie Saccoccio and Black & White Gallery