

Balaschak, Chris, "Allison Miller", FRIEZE, September 8, 2007.

# frieze

## Allison Miller

Published on 08 September 2007

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Allison Miller's second solo show at ACME sees the young painter at her best, exhibiting a series of recent works filled with anxious dichotomies that treats viewers to a delectable exposition of painting's possibilities. *Basket* (all works 2007) is at once an imperceptibly flat panel of improvised yet geometric shapes, and an immersive, palpable expanse of unpolished texture. This palpability comes forth in the most unexpected places; with *Basket* it is in the field of black in the lower right, where this range of darkness is entwined with brushwork, including an enticing spiral formed by the spin of a paintbrush. Viewed at close proximity, *Basket* yields such minuscule depths in the painted surface, while at a distance it displays the illusory space of inexact plots on X-Y-Z coordinates, and circular demarcations beneath geodesic foliage. Miller's paintings are both engaging spaces of reverie and supine planes of painterly conditions.

The productive pressures of these dualisms arise from Miller's ability to allow the major themes of painting over the last century (or longer, depending on who you ask) to coexist – the formal, the tactile, and the indexical. Take *Dinneratthepalms*, in which the blue-and-white form of a woven dream-catcher echoes the painting's own boundaries, fields of variously tinted black offering the unmistakable texture of brushwork, and the title evinces a relationship between the painting and a space outside it.

Yet the particular allure of the work is not limited to Miller's summation of painting's specularity, as it is born in her relaxed sense of structure. *Blue Line* and *Omen* have the slightness of a doodle, but with lines definitively leading our eyes through a circuit of bow-ties and pale-toned stratifications. Attending to every detail of proximity, Miller's paintings are amiable environments rather than intimidating abstractions. With such looseness, these new works are a calm aggregation of simple formations, gathering their strength from the regularity of their distribution. In this sense, not only does Miller's work ascend the known thematics of painting, it channels habitual patterns, tapping into culture's crafty preconditions.