

艾莉森·米勒

从容自信的流露

Allison
Miller

Familiar Sensation



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Images courtesy of the Artist and The Pit



艾莉森·米勒《角落》油画棒、亚克力、铅笔、布面油画
CORNER Bed by Allison Miller 160cm x 200cm oil, oil stick, acrylic, and pencil on canvas 2016

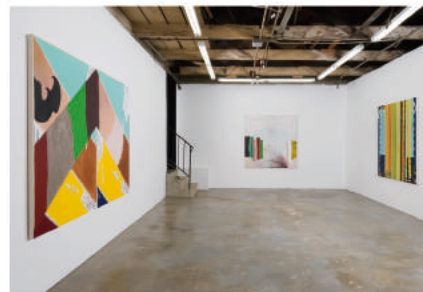
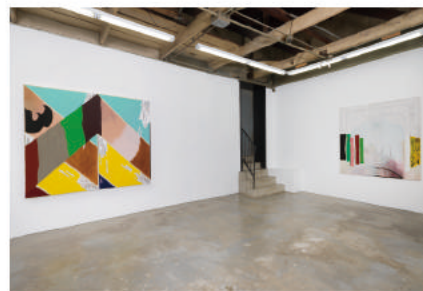
艾莉森·米勒 (Allison Miller) 个展《Screen Jaw Door Arch Prism Corner Bed》(展览的名称由多个展出作品的名字组合而成) 中的作品以自信的姿态迎接观众走进由 The Pit 和 The Pit II 两部分构成的展览空间。它们所展现的自信既自然、谦逊又从容，一再吸引观众去了解它们，甚至与它们成为朋友（不是在线的了解，而

是面对面互动）。这是一种奇怪的感觉，这使得米勒的画作不同于许多当代艺术作品。目前，当代艺术作品似乎可归为两大类：不带艺术家个人色彩的声明式创作和放任自我的自恋式创作。与自命不凡的声明式创作和自我膨胀的自恋式创作相反，米勒的抽象画极具个人风格，在大胆与谨慎之间找到平衡。

Allison Miller's rock-solid paintings in "Screen Jaw Door Arch Prism Corner Bed" greet visitors to The Pit and The Pit II with the kind of confidence—natural, unpretentious, easy-going—that makes you want to get to know them, perhaps become friends with them (not online, but in person, by way of face-to-face interaction. That's a strange sensation. It's distinct from much of what goes on in contemporary art, which seems, instead, divided between the impersonal anonymity of grand public statements and the selfish indulgences of narcissistic navel-gazing. In contrast to the self-assured presumptiveness of the former and the self-aggrandizing attitude of the latter, Miller's idiosyncratic abstractions strike a nice balance between boldness and discretion.

Not a whiff of entitlement can be sniffed in any of her gritty, down-to-earth canvases. The same goes for the stink of privilege. Assuming nothing, and presuming less, Miller's pictures of nothing in particular strip painting—and communication—to its bare bones, where blunt utterances and no-bullshit convictions make for the awkward silences that often accompany real insight. In such moments we are usually at a loss for words. Not because our vocabularies are lacking. Or because our perceptual capacities are inadequate. But because the newly discovered knowledge makes us see that what we had thought to be true is indeed false, and that the way our minds had been organizing reality is out of touch with the real thing. Such is the discomfort of existential discovery. The excitement of finally getting things right is complicated by the regret that we did not come to the truth sooner. Not to mention the imminent, still inchoate sense that the newly discovered truth will soon be proven wrong. It's a bittersweet process. While Miller's quietly conflicted pictures lay everything they've got on the line—in all its naked, this-is-how-it-came-to-be honesty—they, simultaneously, remain charmingly unimpressed with their own accomplishments. It's that intrinsic, built-in humility that makes the L.A. painter's works so fascinating, both so approachable and so unreachable. Approachability and unreachability are incompatible attributes. One does not go with the other. If not opposites, they clearly conflict. Each leads in different directions, suggests contrary attitudes, and creates distinct atmospheres. And that complex, even contradictory dividedness goes to the heart—the very being or essence or ethos—of Miller's peculiar paintings. It conveys the sense that each of her works is of two minds about itself—if not three or four. This is what draws me to her works. Rather than assuming or insisting or pretending that resolution and harmony and wholeness are the point and purpose of art, Miller's internally conflicted compositions suggest that the lives of people (and paintings) are too multilayered (and nuanced) to be conceived in such simple (and one-dimensional) terms. Her electric, often jolting abstractions put me in mind of people who have ambiguous, even ambivalent, relationships to themselves—not simply to the world around them, but to that part of their identities that makes them themselves: unique individuals.

The etymology of "individual" intimates indivisibility, singularity, and completeness. But all of those qualities describe only part of Miller's multiplicitous abstractions. What gives them their strength, what makes them just what they are—and



展览现场
at The exhibition

nothing else—is the internal inconsistencies they give voice to, while still conveying the sense that they are fairly well-ordered amalgamations or effectively arranged constellations of competing and conflicting impulses and understandings, philosophies and world views, assertions and replies. Miller's pictures elicit empathy not because they serve up, to viewers, mirror images of ourselves, but because they invite us to extend our sympathies beyond what we already know, what we are familiar with, what we understand. Incomprehension is built into the experience. The same goes for uncertainty, doubt, and frustration. That sense of mystery—and risk—that accompanies every real discovery goes to the soul of Miller's existential paintings, which stand, like silent sentinels, fatalistically ready for whatever might come their way.

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米勒的油画既大胆又现实，在任何一幅作品中，观众都得不到一丝权利或特权，她不对任何事物进行假设或推测，反之，她除去一切表面装饰，让绘画和表达呈现出本质。在她的作品中，直率的表达和坚定的信念制造了一种尴尬的沉默，而真理往往伴随左右。在这样的时刻，我们通常无言以对。这不是由于词汇或感知能力的欠缺，而是因为新发现的知识使我们看到，我们以为正确的观点其实是错的。而且，我们理解现实的方式脱离了现实本身。这种不快乐来自于存在主义层面的发现。我们感到兴奋的同时，又因为未能早点发现真理而心生遗憾；更别提存在心里的一种隐约的不安，担心新发现的真理很快又会被推翻。这是一个苦乐参半的过程。米勒的作品以不加掩饰、直达本质的诚实阐明了各种模棱两可的问题，令人着迷的是，它们对自己所取得

的成就似乎无动于衷。正是这种内在的谦逊使这位洛杉矶画家的作品如此迷人，既平易近人又遥不可及。平易近人与遥不可及是不相容的特性，两者互不协调；若非站在彼此的对立面，至少是互相矛盾的。两者朝不同的方向发展，表现出相反的态度，创造出的氛围也明显不同。这种复杂甚至是自相矛盾的分裂性直达米勒作品的核心（或根本，或本质，或精神），使作品独具一格。观众感到，她的每一幅作品都有至少两个思想——若非三个甚至是四个。这正是吸引我的地方。作为一名艺术家，米勒不假设、坚称或假装艺术的意义和目的在于找到答案、创造和谐和完整性，反之，她的作品固有的矛盾表明，人的生命（和绘画）是多层面（和微妙）的，无法用简单（和单向度）的词语加以表达。她的抽象主义画作令人震惊，经常让我想起那些内心挣扎，

There's a rugged loveliness to Miller's abstract compositions, each of which is made up of simple shapes, unfussy smudges, and wayward doodles. All come in colors that can be plucked from any midsize box of crayons. Red, green, blue, black, white, and yellow predominate. Brown, tan, and peach (otherwise known as flesh) appear almost as frequently. Aqua, gray, and baby blue provide restless contrasts. Miller's titles are nouns, all single words, which also comprise the show's title: "Screen Jaw Door Arch Prism Corner Bed," except for "Drag Arch," a two-worder that does double-duty, referring, simultaneously, to the way we move files on the screens of our digital devices and to an architectural invention that allows doors and windows to be built into walls and bridges and aqueducts to span valleys and chasms. Nouns suit Miller's paintings because her works similarly eschew the editorializing of adjectives and adverbs as well as the dramatic actions of verbs. In a word, nouns, like Miller's abstract canvases, are just there: obdurate objects that neither go out of their way to engage us nor shy away from our desire to interact with them.

The sense that Miller's works have pasts—which include a fair share of hardship, frustration, and failure—is palpable. You can glimpse it in the ghostly shadows that haunt

艾莉森·米勒《拖拱门》油丙烯、铅笔、拼贴，布面油画
DRAG ARCH by Alison Miller 152cm×143cm oil, ink, acrylic, and pencil on canvas 2016艾莉森·米勒《颚》亚克力、拼贴，布面油画
JAW by Alison Miller 152cm×133cm oil, acrylic, and collage on canvas 2016

the laboriously re-worked surfaces of her paintings, where stray textures roam and partially painted-over sections bespeak decisions that didn't work out for the best—if at all. In many pieces, patterns appear to fall into place only to be discombobulated by errant marks, defeated by reversed forms, and turned inside out by illogical oddities—all of which still makes sense, poetically and provocatively, if not rationally or reasonably. In a sense, Miller sets up structures that flirt with symmetry but never quite get there. Many hint at the consistency of identifiable patterns. But instead of locking all the parts into proper place, she breaks the pattern well before it is arrived at or consummated. In her irascible hands, the regularity of repetition doesn't have a chance: Before orderliness happens, willful resistance—or stubborn idiosyncrasy—wins out. It is as if Miller's compositions are congenitally predisposed to chaos, but only after going to great pains—striving, doggedly and dutifully—for order and all the reassuring stability that comes with it. That is the peculiar, even perverse conundrum in which her paintings find themselves—not to mention their viewers.



艾莉森·米勒《屏幕》亚克力、布面油画
Screens by Alison Miller 121cm x 121cm oil and acrylic on canvas 2016

自相矛盾的人——我所指的不仅是这些人对周遭世界的态度，更指他们对自己身份所存在的矛盾心理。后者使他们成为不同于他人的独特个体。

“个体”的英语单词“individual”的词源涵盖了“不可分性”(indivisibility)、“独特性”(singularity)和“完整性”(completeness)的含义。但米勒的抽象主义绘画如此多样化，这些特性也只描述了她的一部分作品。真正让作品从当代艺术中脱颖而出，是它们所表达出来的自相矛盾性，但与此同时，在米勒的作品中，人们感到多种思想有序共存，互相矛盾的冲动与理解、哲学与世界观、主张与答复都以有效的方式进行排列。米勒的作品之所以能引起共鸣，并不是因为观众从中看到了自己的镜像，而是因为作品邀请我们去体会我们不知道、不熟悉和不理解的东西。“难以理解”是观看米勒的作品时必有感受，此外还有不确定、怀疑和沮丧的情绪。伴随每一次醍醐灌顶而来的神秘感和危机感直达米勒存在主义作品的核心。她的作品像沉默的哨兵一样，顺从地等待着可能的信仰。

米勒的抽象构图有一种粗糙的可爱，每个构图由简单的形状、斑点和不规则的涂

鸦构成。画面中的所有颜色都可以从蜡笔盒中找到，红、绿、蓝、黑、白和黄为主要颜色。出现频率较高的还有棕色、茶色和桃色（也叫肉色）。浅绿色、灰色和淡蓝色则形成令人不安的反差。米勒作品的名字都是单个名词，这些名词也构成了展览的名称“Screens Jaw Door Arch Prim Corner Bed”。唯一的例外是作品“Drag Arch”，这个双字词语有双重含义，既指我们在数字设备屏幕上移动文件的方式，亦指一种可将门窗嵌入墙壁、桥梁和沟渠以跨越凹口和裂口的建筑设计。名词十分适用于米勒的绘画，相比之下，形容词和副词总是带有主观色彩，而动词则展现了戏剧化的动作。总而言之，米勒的抽象油画就像名词一样安静地待在一边，既不费尽心思吸引我们的注意力，也不回避我们想与之互动的欲望。


观众可明显感到，米勒的作品有过去，经历过困难、挫折和失败。幽灵般的影子萦绕着米勒费力修改的画面，我们从中可见一斑。在这些画面中，随处可见散落的纹理和几经加工的局部，后者表明艺术家一开始的创作不尽如人意。在许多幅作品中，有条不紊的图案总是被错误标志和倒转形式所打乱，更被不合逻辑的古怪手法弄得里



艾莉森·米勒《深渊》油画棒、亚克力、造型膏、布面油画
Pit II by Alison Miller 88cm x 88cm oil, stick, acrylic, and modeling paste on canvas 2016

Paradoxically, and appropriately, it's a pleasure to make your way through a painting by Miller. The various ways she has wrestled her compositions into existence provide all sorts of satisfactions. All of the pleasures that unfold before her works are multiform, multivalent, multilayered. Some come in the shape of single drips, which Miller has preserved from subsequent applications of spray paint, oil stick, and acrylic by protecting them with strips of tape, which she has then torn away to reveal the quirky treasures they once covered. Others are fastidiously eccentric, like patterns disrupted just for the fun of it. Or drips dripped atop other drips, forming rainbow rivulets. Heightening our attentiveness to otherwise incidental details, Miller reveals herself to be a keen-eyed pragmatist, a painter with the capacity to transform the

gaps and breaks of a composition into unexpected wonders. Seeming to come out of nowhere, such undeniably wild delights are all the more potent for it.

The disruptive magic Miller works into her canvases wallops your body the moment you open the door of *The Pit II* and see *Red*, a two-panel painting that covers all but a sliver of the auxiliary space's back wall. In one fell swoop, Miller tips the scales to favor not only painting, but all that is possible in art's overlooked nooks and crannies—the cracks in the sidewalk, the chinks in the armor, the glitches in the system. With Miller as a guide, those are great places to be, especially in a world overrun by corporate uniformity and lockstep regularity. Being an underdog never felt better—or functioned more effectively. 



展览现场
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外颠倒。这种创作手法或许不合理，但却十分撩逗人心，也有助于画面的诗意化。从某种意义上讲，米勒所创建的结构总是与“对称”保持着若即若离的关系。但从未真正达到对称。米勒的许多作品都暗示了可辨认图案的一致性，不同的是，她不让各个部分各就各位，而是在图案达到完整或完美之前便将其打乱。在她的笔下，规律性的重复从没有现身的机会；在画面即将被条理性统治之时，故意为之的阻力或跟头已见的怪癖总是胜出。米勒的构图似乎天生就有陷入混乱的倾向，但总是要煞费苦心、周旋而尽心地追求秩序以及随之而来的稳定性之后，才肯心甘情愿地接受混乱。她的作品正是在这种古怪甚至是不合常理的难题中找到自己，观众亦是如此。

米勒的作品既矛盾又独特，探索起来十分有趣。她使用了多种创作手法，满足观众的各种遐想。她的作品就像一个百宝盒，给予观众多种形式、多种意义、多层次的乐趣。她将颜料滴在画布上，形成水滴的形状；为了避免受到后续使用的喷漆、油画棒和亚克力的影响，她用胶带将它们保护起来，随后将胶带撕开，让被藏起来的珍宝

重见天日。另外一些手法则尤其古怪，比如将好端端的图案破坏，但似乎只是为了享受破坏的乐趣；或者在水滴图案上再滴颜料，形成一条条的彩虹小河，通过吸引我们去关注看似偶然的细节，米勒展现出自己是一名眼光锐利的实用主义者。更是一个能将构图中的缺口转变成意外惊喜的画家。这些乐趣似是天外飞来，因此更属惊喜。

一打开 The Pitt 11 展览空间的大门，映入眼帘的作品《床》(Bed) 便如一道闪电击中你，这是由于米勒在画布上施放了破坏性的“魔法”。《床》是一副双联面大作品，几乎占满了整面墙。刹那之间，米勒让观众看到的不仅是作品，还有艺术中经常为人忽略的小细节，比如人行道上的缝隙、盔甲的裂缝和系统的小故障。在米勒的引导之下，这些微小的小细节都成了美妙之处，在这个注重整齐划一和按部就班的世界，这些细节显得尤其珍贵——失败者们从未感觉如此良好，行事也从未如此高效。■



艾莉森·米勒《床》(Bed) 作品，2016年。尺寸：149.5cm x 238cm (149.5cm x 238cm each panel)
oil on canvas, acrylic on canvas, tape, collage, 2016