

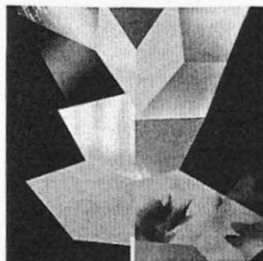
SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Art Review
February 2005

Kim Fisher

13 Nov-18 Dec
John Connelly Presents,
New York (+1 212 337 9563,
www.johnconnellypresents.com)

Review by Daniel Kunitz



Diamonds, or rather gems, seem to be Kim Fisher's best friends. In the past year alone, her gem-based paintings have gained her entrance to the Whitney Biennial, the California Biennial, and now her first New York solo show.

Initially Fisher's canvases appear as updated versions of Colour Field Painting or Minimalist abstraction. In fact, to find contemporary artists whose work directly engages with Modernism – a rare thing among the narrative-driven painters who dominate galleries today – one must look to Los Angeles, where Fisher lives and works. Like Kenneth Noland before her, Fisher paints chevrons and other hard-edged geometric shapes, though I have yet to see a target. In their attention to the support, her work also calls to mind Robert Ryman's stripped-down monochromes.

However, Fisher is too much a child of her own era merely to revisit the formalist abstractions of the past. While hers is a self-conscious approach, it is not concerned solely with the optical experience of paint on canvas. Consider the four paintings on view at Connelly, all oil on linen. In *Padparadscha* – the title refers to a type of sapphire – faceted planes of yellow, black, orange and red shoot out from the centre of the untreated linen support towards the edge of the frame, resulting in a sort of Futurist or neo-Cubist composition. Yet Fisher's reds and oranges run over the edges of the frame, on the 'extra', deliberately untrimmed portion of fabric that forms the real edge of the piece.

This surplus material running over the frame edge has become

one of the artist's signature strategies. The smoky, black-and-white diamonds, arranged in a dispersed Argyll pattern, in *Corundum 19 (Sapphire Gray Scale)* also slip past the frame. In *Beryl, 21*, an unfolded crystal structure in blues, greens, and whites, and *Carbon 17 (Bort Diamond)*, which uses grey, white and blue-green triangles (as well as a few other polyhedrons) to form a flat octagon, the imagery remains centred on the canvas – only the monochrome grounds colour the excess fabric.

One could argue that painting beyond the frame in this manner serves primarily formal ends – emphasising the shape of the support; consciously teasing the limits of the painting – much in the way Noland's and Stella's shaped paintings sought to reconfigure the notion of all-over painting through the shapes of their supports. Still, one can't help feeling that Fisher's formal-seeming experiments are more accurately allusions, quotations of bygone formal strategies that actually reinforce the content rather than commenting on the limits of the medium.

Seen in this light, the crinkled fabric hanging over the frames underlines the painting's status as an object of value and glamour that seduces through light and colour – just like the gems from which the imagery is abstracted. Whichever way you take them, Fisher's canvases are a rare find among contemporary painting: abstractions that knowingly address the legacy of recent art history.

Above: Kim Fisher, *Beryl, 21*, 2004, oil on linen, 213.4 x 178.7cm

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