

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

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Suzanne McClelland: Andres Thalmann, Zurich

by: Quinn Latimer

Like so many artists, Suzanne McClelland is entranced with words. But in the works here she was less concerned with the visual representation of texts than with the sonics of spoken language. Her abstract paintings and monotypes feature cascades of words and letter-like forms—dazzling constellations of *O*'s lyrical spills of *L*'s, episodes of scribbled *E*'s that almost ring in the ear.

In large black-and-white paintings like *Deepest Heap* and *Highest Heap* (both 2009), loopy sprays of paint and small universes of scratchy, cursive words in graphite are partially obscured by milky layers of gestural acrylic brushwork and swirls of resinlike polymer. A series of smaller, monochrome paintings called "Erase" (2010) comes in spate of Easter-egg-bright colors. *Erase (monochrome in red)* features bulbous crimson rectangles stacked into a kind of compressed perspective.

The monotypes are gorgeous feats of layering and coloration. The diptych *Lullaby #8, ohno* (2006) moves along the red scale from deep magenta to an orange rust; punctuating this sumptuous color field are elongated white ovals, like deflated bicycle tires, created when the artist dripped oil onto the printing press bed, which pulled the color away and left perfect pale circles.

This circular motif was reprised in the striking wallpaper that covered the walls behind the paintings, turning the exhibition into a single installation. The wallpaper's pattern was composed of blown-up details of the *O*-laden monotypes, and was colored in shades of pebbled blue and violet. McClelland has tried this kind of immersion before, most notably in 1992 at the Whitney Museum in New York, where she installed one of her "walk-in-paintings." What set this installation apart was the quite literal vocabulary of forms so deftly emblazoned on it.

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