

REVIEWS

Marietta Hoferer

The Brooklyn Rail, December 2006/January 2007

by Jennifer Riley

Fieldwork | Kentler International Drawing Space November

Don't let the initial charms of the quiet, reductive logic of Marietta Hoferer's drawings fool you. This artist may be a maximalist in a minimalist guise.

All of the works in this show are based on the same structuring framework, the grid, which is delicately laid out in pencil on paper. Upon this Hoferer applies simple to the utterly complex, and the apparently serious to the subtly humorous.

Central to the art of this German-born, New York-based artist is the notion of the body as the filter through which the work comes into being. Artists such as Yayoi Kusama and Jackie Winsor come to mind when considering the repetitive (possibly exhausting) application of Hoferer's abstract imagery and the extremely effective manipulation of her humble materials.

To make these pieces, the artist systematically builds a pattern with thousands of small squares of tape, ranging from 1/4 inch to nearly one inch. The combination underscores the work's organic origins and recalls the homemade qualities of crafts.

From a distance the pieces of tape can seem like pixels in digitized imagery. Up close, we see traces of the artist's hand, fingerprints embedded in the tape, and, by extension, the physical commitment involved in this process-oriented work.

Hoferer's relationship to pattern places her in the company of artists such as Cynthia Carlson, Valerie Jaudon and Phillip Taaffe among others, who since the '70s have used an abstract vocabulary to address issues of the tentative and the unstable.

While Hoferer's works may appear to employ a repetitive system, once our eyes adjust, we begin to decode their expansive patterns to discover unique moments, irregularities and interruptions. Hoferer implies the notion of the ideal while simultaneously acknowledging its shadow of incongruity and imperfection.

The diagrammatic nature of Hoferer's nearly colorless pages seem like evocations of the planar geometric veils of Arabic architecture, mosaics and textiles. Other patterns behave more symbolically—the very, very small or the very, very big—of that which is at the limits of our perception.

An equally compelling aspect of the project is the tape's reflective sheen and the shifting direction of its texture as it is caught by the light. Hoferer playfully invites a level of viewer participation more often associated with sculpture than flat art. As we move, some areas of the pattern shimmer brightly while others sink back into a shallow space, engaging us in a kind of dance.

The work expands into real space with "Field" (1998-2006), a 140-inch by 108-inch six-panel piece, installed just within the limits of one section of the gallery and acting as a monumental field. Four sections of this very large piece were made in 1998, at which point the project was abandoned, and the last two panels are clear and bright white while the older tape has yellowed. Hoferer reclaims some of the older pages, however, by enjoining some areas of the older sections with additional pattern fragments and new tape, sowing the old with the new. It is a simple but inclusive gesture that acknowledges entropy, demonstrates change over time and provokes thoughts of renewal.

Marietta Hoferer brings her adhesive works to the new Dust Gallery

Las Vegas City Life, January 14, 2008

by Jarret Keene

Marietta Hoferer takes great pleasure in scouring New York City hardware stores for different kinds of strapping tape. Unlike most artists, she doesn't need tape to patch canvases or secure art supplies. Instead, tape serves as an artistic medium through which she explores sculptural properties like light, glossiness, texture and stretchiness. Hoferer completely immerses herself in the world of packing tape and finds comfort in learning more about its endless possibilities.

"Even the cheap stuff at 99 Cents Only stores is fascinating," she confesses. "I've found that the fibers are uneven and less perfect than the more expensive stuff."

Indeed, Hoferer is a veritable tape maniac, as her new solo show at Dust Gallery confirms. Called *Unknown*, the works displayed are made via a simple yet labor-intensive process. First, she starts with a pencil grid and cuts large sheets of white paper with a pair of scissors. Then she begins snipping very small pieces of white and translucent tape and applying them to the paper. The result typically consists of a series of strictly aligned and monochromatic snowflakes, elegant as they are geometrical. And they must be delicately perceived and enjoyed, too. Hoferer's paper works don't leap out and grab your lapel; instead they encourage you to meditate and reflect on their seemingly infinite patterns and subtle luminosity.

Despite her work's mathematical precision, the German-born Hoferer claims creating pieces like the lovely ghost-kissed "Weeds" is an organic, intuitive process.

"The patterns and the imagery you see come from playing around while I'm working," she says. "I only have the vaguest idea when I start out and from there things begin to evolve and grow. The nice thing about tape is that, if you don't like what you see, you can just remove it. There's certainly a lot of flexibility involved."

Hoferer's background is as a sculptor in Berlin. She says she has rarely painted, except briefly as a foundation in art school. Drawing and sculpture have always been her main focus. But after arriving in New York, she soon grew tired of the heaviness and storage problems that are part and parcel of being a sculptor in the big city. Hoferer adapted to her surroundings, though, by becoming obsessed with hardware-store tape.

"It wasn't a conscious decision," she insists. "I merely stumbled across a diversity of tapes in the store and started buying rolls and cutting them up. Tape, I soon discovered, offers so many surprises that lead me to different imagery. For the work, I limit myself to keeping within the white or translucent range of tapes, and the tape itself has so much color, especially when outside light reflects on it. My New York studio faces the midtown skyline, and the lights outside are reflected in the tape. The colors change at certain points throughout the day."

The same is true of *Unknown*, which is currently on display at Dust's new location at the base of the Soho Lofts building in downtown Las Vegas. Although natural light than before, giving Hoferer's work an extra bit of glint.

The artist is an admirer of the light of the desert Southwest. Last week, in between installing her show and taking part in an opening reception, Hoferer and her husband spent some time hiking at Red Rock and basking in a deep-hued sunset. "The natural light in Las Vegas is amazing compared to New York, and especially compared to Europe," she says. "The reflection of the colors from the canyon walls is really something to behold."

Light is one thing, and pattern is another. While some art critics have identified the influence of Islamic mosque tiles and Roman mosaics in her work, Hoferer says what the viewer experiences is merely the effect of simply geometry. She denies any effort to copy older, established forms of art. And she maintains the idea governing her work -- cutting tape and sticking it on paper -- is something anyone could execute.

Moreover, she goes so far as to say anyone could have executed her entire show with the benefit of very little art training. In her estimation, process is the central part of what she does. Since she doesn't refer to any sketches, she has to get physical with each piece. Indeed, it's only in the physical act of creating these works that she comes up with all her ideas.

Speaking of ideas, has she ever considered getting an endorsement from a major tape company?

"No, but I should probably get one," she laughs. "I would rather take sponsorship money than a free case of tape rolls, though. I don't really need an awful lot of tape to create these pieces."

Unknown Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; through March 23

Dust Gallery
900 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Suite B
880-3878 or www.dustgallery.com

Marietta Hoferer: Visible / Invisible at Galerie Mourlot

M / The New York Art World, November 2008 / issue: Vol. 12 No. 3
by Megan Garwood

Marietta Hoferer Establishes a Language of Meditation

The visitor actively participates in an exploration of meditation when encountering the works included in Marietta Hoferer's new solo exhibition, *Visible/Invisible*. The exhibition's title suggests that the viewer will be confronted by the dichotomy of the visible and the invisible; in fact, the work oscillates between a unique revelation of the artist's intention and the inescapable modularity of the picture plane.

Hoferer builds intricate pieces, fortified by tape on paper, which play with the structure of the grid to create nearly symmetrical systems of intersecting horizontal and vertical lines, as well as patterns of variously sized shapes. This near adherence to the formal rules of the grid organizes the pictorial space into one single plane - a fusion of foreground, middle ground, and background - replacing representational subject matter with abstraction, and invites meticulous examination. By eliminating recognizable figurative forms, Hoferer forces the viewer to mediate on presentation, material and formal elements.

Hoferer's ser

subversive marks and unexpected self-revelations. The insertion of the artist intentions into her minimalist compositions adds a personal touch to a previously rigid ideology, inviting the viewer to interact with the works. Variations on the formal grid, unexpected combinations of media, reflections of light and other evidences of the artist's hand bring the viewer into a contemplative state, much like the repetition of a mantra elevates the spirit in meditation. The series engages in a minimalist rhetoric while also compiling a brief history of its creation; the works oscillate between precision and spontaneity, allowing each viewer to form a personal interpretation.

Hoferer premeditates

visible in the finished work. This leads us to presume that she intended to alter the traditional grid pattern. In the past, the minimalist grid has been used as a conceptual tool, distancing the artist from the work by presenting a mechanical, inorganic organization of the world. Hoferer's appropriation of
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beyond the picture plane by repeating a pattern not only on paper, but also in the viewer's mind.

Hoferer's reworking of the grid echoes Agnes Martin's drawings of the 1960s, in which Martin attempted to capture the power of nature and of Asian religion by projecting her feelings on repetitive forms. Hoferer has not stated her intentions clearly, but her approach evokes Martin's existentialism. Her choice of medium adds layers of history to a two-dimensional grid. Tangible materials re-energize an established discourse.

In a piece entitled *Braille 5*, small, narrowly-spaced rows of white artist tape stretch across the width of the paper, overlapping with vertical columns of the same material. The piece forms a perfect square - 38 inches by 38 inches - yet the grid is slightly skewed. Both groups of lines, vertical and horizontal, attract and then repel each other, almost depicting waves of lines crashing onto a paper shore. Although, at first glance, *Braille 5* seems to aim for calculated perfection - a geometric web of pure, white lines - further investigation reveal small incongruities. The piece juxtaposes two opposing formal elements, thus exciting the viewer's eye. In *Braille 5* trite tape transforms into a language for the blind. Hoferer's titles do not relate directly to her pieces, they refer to the idea of a universal language.

Hoferer's work

fingertips over the surface; as a drawing, it speaks of intersections and interactions of lines; as a sculpture, it embodies a palpable language. Although the bumps in *Braille 5* may not be literally read as braille, they emit a tacit story to each viewer. To ensure a comprehensive reading of *Braille 5*, the viewer must consider many perspectives. At the intersection of vertical and horizontal lines, a shadow cast upon the paper exposes another grid underneath the three-dimensional tape, revealing another element of Hoferer's work, light. The surface confronts the viewer with a dazzling light show as the overhead lighting dances around the grid. Acting as a catalyst, light brings out a different reaction, another pattern. Reflections of light often expose slight nuances in organization: a tilted square, a wavy line, a faint trace of pencil buried beneath the tape. Light reminds the viewer of Hoferer's meticulous process. In a process similar to papier colle , Hoferer has revitalizes pure white tape, transforming it into a buzzing visual experience.

Like a sculpture's multiple viewpoints, Hoferer's work layers metaphysical viewpoints, combining minimalist, mannerist, and conceptual theories.

Visible/Invisible

den stories. Viewers must mediate on Marietta Hoferer's works in order to truly comprehend the multiple stories that they tell.

Transporting their art past the merely lovely

Boston Globe, April 9, 2004

By Cate McQuaid, Globe Correspondent

Some art is just luscious

lovely; there are concepts and compositions to consider. If there aren't, the work turns merely pretty. If, on the other hand, that delicious entry point sustains its pleasure because the art is also something to reckon with, you're in luck.

Marietta Hoferer, a German-born, New York-based artist, and Jason Young, a Canadian, have shows in galleries on Harrison Avenue that both tantalize and hold up to scrutiny. They complement each other: Hoferer offers up white-on-white works on paper at OH+T Gallery; Young shows color-rich, nearly sculptural paintings at Clifford-Smith. Both artists have a deep concern for surface and reflectivity. Both use workaday materials to conjure almost magical experiences for the viewer.

For Hoferer, the material of choice is strapping tape: cheap, striated, and shiny. She cuts it into tiny pieces and builds patterns with it over a graphite grid. The tape picks up the light and shimmers as you walk by; the more complex the pattern, the more subtle the interplay of shadow and light over the surface. These works nod to modernism, and, in their intricate designs, to centuries of weaving. One piece sticks to verticals and horizontals; it's austere, but appears anemic beside the layered geometries that appear in the other pieces.

The best part of Hoferer's work is a wall installation with 40 separate pages formatted in a grid. Here, the taping looks most like tatting: These could be lace doilies, or enlarged snowflakes -- no one like another. The piece bodily engages the viewer: you have to walk to and fro, duck, even jump to get the full flavor of the way light passes over it. Sometimes it splatters over a design, as bright as sun on water, but in crystalline patterns. Sometimes it looks like white gold; sometimes it's a shadowy taupe.

Taping is exacting and exhausting work, and for all the time she puts in, Hoferer creates art that feels a glimmer away from vanishing. For the viewer, it's well worth all that effort.

The sensual imagery is hard to avoid with Young's paintings: He aims for the senses through his finesse and his materials. It's impressive work, if not quite as intellectually rigorous as Hoferer's.

Two Three-fers

La Weekly, June 21, 2006

By Peter Frank

Things are rather more sanguine in the Westside precincts, where Stas Orlovski shows painting-size drawings concatenating disparate elements, representational and abstract, into unlikely landscapes, the more compelling for their very incompleteness. For her part, Ilene Sunshine does drawing-size paintings in which colorful, entirely nonobjective elements intertwine with similar playfulness — a low-key antic maintained by her sinewy Tinkertoy wall construction. And maintaining an elegant aloofness, the shimmering unframed paperworks of Marietta Hoferer take classic minimalism to new levels of near-invisible sensuality, their identical horizontal bands defined with pencil and transparent tape.

Stas Orlovski, Ilene Sunshine and Marietta Hoferer at Overtones, 11306 Venice Blvd., Mar Vista; Fri.-Sun., noon-6 p.m.; thru June 25. (310) 915-0346.

Dust Gallery boasts smart pairing

Las Vegas Weekly, March 31, 2005

By Chuck Twardy

Among abstraction's progeny, pattern painting and op art are sometimes uneasy offspring. The latter arose in the 1960s and shares its cousin pop art's impishness, but is interested mostly in the illusions that patterns and colors create. Hitting its stride in the '70s, pattern painting asserted the simple pleasures of visual exuberance against the intellectual rigors of minimalism. It did so with the implication that patterns were the overlooked province of "women's work."

The work in *Less Is More* at Dust Gallery, on display through April 10, reconciles the siblings. With rigid lines and nebulous swaths, Jennifer Riley achieves a creamy, radiant depth in her paintings, almost as if she were depicting a narrow focal distance against a background of regressing blur. This is especially true in paintings such as "Biological Flutters" and "Borrowed Kisses," with their foreground architecture of thin, oblique vectors echoed in bright, vague bands. Outlining the slender bands in yellow plays tricks with color perception while suggesting vibrant motion.

But her paintings also play with the pleasures of pattern. "Vita Activa," in particular, has the deceptively simple air of striped kitchen linen.

Riley is smartly paired with Marietta Hoferer, likewise a New Yorker but German-born and educated. Her elegant drawings comprise pencil lines and sometimes tiny strips of different types of clear tape on paper. They process minimalist rigor through the prism of op art, and the results are literally prismatic. The strips of tape refract light in ways that cause shifts of tone and value depending on the angle of viewing.

This play can vary within a composition. The triptych "L-M-R," for instance, has strapping tape whose embedded lines counterpoint the blocks of clear tape with a frosted texture.

Hoferer's work also has its pattern-pleasure aspect. The individual sheets (they are unframed, and hang from clips) of "Small Crystal" embrace a similar arrangement of interlocking, stair-step circles, reminiscent of quilts. The square panels of "J Piece" each comprise a kind of snowflake pattern of interlocking circles, also quilt-like. But the grid arrangement of these loose paper "tiles" makes for an engaging visual experience all to itself.

This shrewd pairing makes for a rewarding show.