

Israel Stolnicki's Open Grids

There are many types of grids in painting today. Whether one looks at those of Agnes Martin, the early geometry of Ellsworth Kelly, or the color charts from the late 1960s by Gerhard Richter, these grids do not exactly amplify the lighter side of expressionism. They do not tell us much about the inner-side of feeling or how these grids modulate in such a way to become form.

This is not to suggest they are empty of feeling. Rather they are ambivalent in a cursory way, in some cases, given to a strictly formal maneuver. They act as a kind of fundamental presence in relation to meaning in the abstract painting of recent decades.

Over the past weeks, I have looked at the paintings of the Brazilian artist Israel Stolnicki and found something quite different, perhaps ironic. Stolnicki leaves the formal presence behind in order to let go with the brush and thus transport a unique sense of color. Through these persistent repetitive gestural nuances built over a given structure, Stolnicki represents a more casual sensation that gives way to an unlikely harmony of overlapping color.

Yet, at the same time, he redeems himself in the act of painting through a sensation that extends beyond the disconsolate and beyond the inimical rapport of primary painting. With Israel Stolnicki we are given a plausible paradox that the isolated formalism of the past can now be transformed in a way that brings effervescence into a more inclusive, brighter ambivalence by a painter who has willed himself to come into the light of the present.

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