

Julie Oppermann's paintings land with a gut punch

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Julie Oppermann's "THizzz," 2012, acrylic on canvas, 82 x 78 inches. (Mark Moore Gallery)

In her first solo show in Los Angeles, Berlin- and New York-based painter Julie Oppermann forces three very different things together: 1960s Op art, '70s video imagery and '80s abstraction. The results — gnarly, quasi-nauseous stripe paintings that look as if they've been to hell and back — come off as if they are trying too hard.

Oppermann's three small works on paper have the presence of studies, experiments in which she plays the queasy colors she favors against taped-off sections that create moiré patterns that splinter before they cohere into anything that resembles a harmonious composition.

Three large canvases are stronger: more raw and nasty. Made of more taped-off layers piled atop one another, they leave more room for happy accidents. Less flat, they include more pictorial depth. Hints of images or figures or recognizable forms flicker in the space behind their worked-over surfaces.

That ambiguous ghostliness breathes life into Oppermann's unsubtle abstractions, which otherwise seem more focused on the forcefulness of gut punches.