

On NYC Construction Barriers, Jean Shin Sees Artful Remnants of Development and Destruction



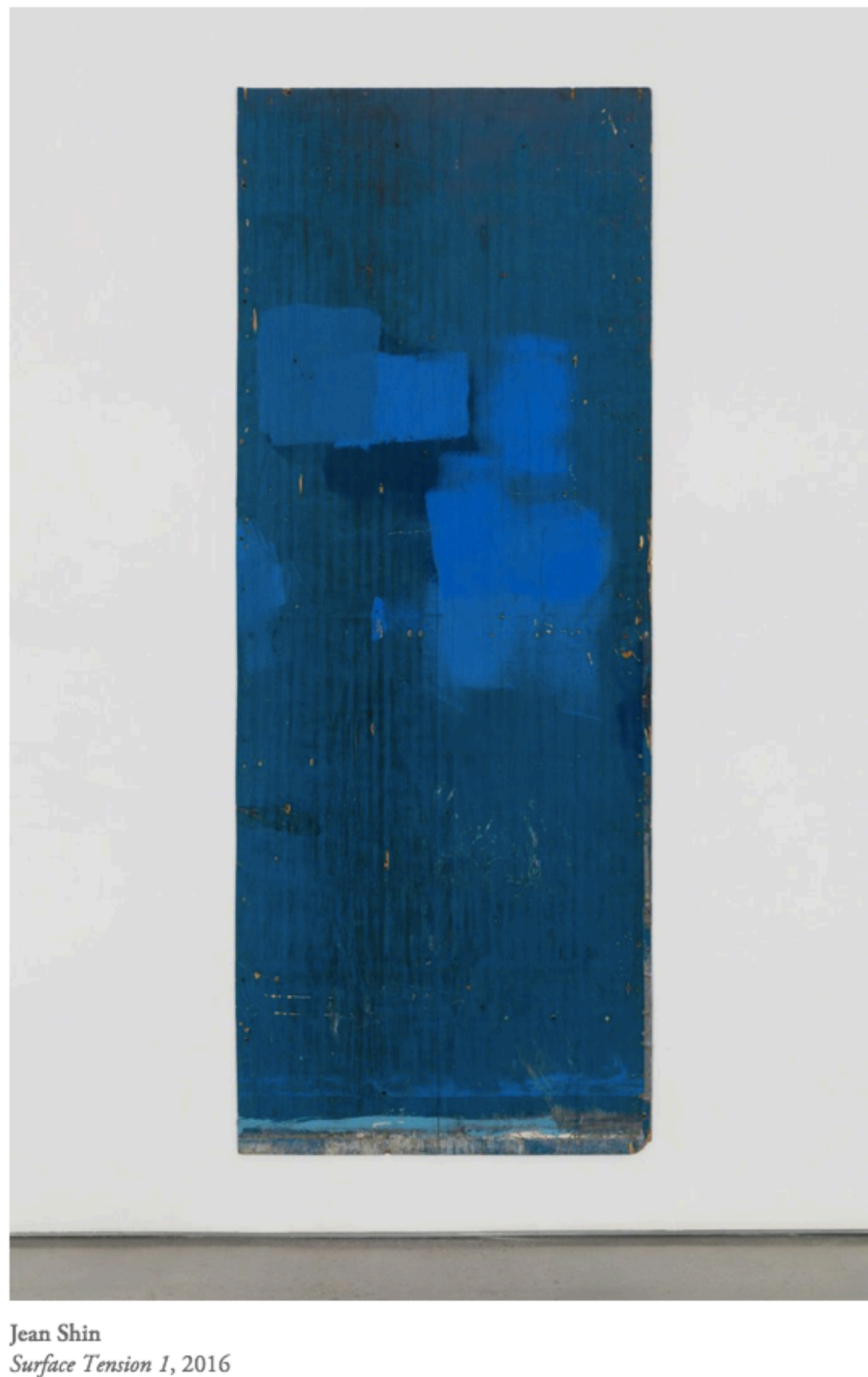
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Jean Shin
Surface Tension 2A, 2B, and 2C, 2016
Cristin Tierney

Celebrated contemporary artist **Jean Shin** has a history of finding surprising beauty in everyday material. For “*Surface Tension*,” her debut at **Cristin Tierney** in New York, she displays “excerpts” from the wooden fences that surround New York’s ubiquitous construction sites.

To enter the gallery is to face walls lined with large-scale wooden panels painted various shades of blue. As paint drips down their surfaces and mingles with bold, overlapping patches of pigment, other details begin to reveal themselves. Ragged scraps of black-and-yellow caution tape appear. Some panels have irregular edges, holes, and missing chunks; another panel seems unfinished, with an unpainted strip of wood visible at its base. The wood is warped, chipped, rotting. The imperfections add up.



Jean Shin
Surface Tension 1, 2016
Cristin Tierney



Jean Shin
Surface Tension 5, 2016
Cristin Tierney

Visually, the rough yet elegant panels could be mistaken for professional-grade abstract paintings. In fact, these paintings didn’t come from Shin’s studio; they came from the streets of New York. Intrigued by the plywood walls that surround the city’s infinite construction sites, Shin began collecting the disused panels. She recognized artistic allure in their accidental, abstract beauty, but in the wood’s pockmarks and painted-over graffiti, she also saw powerful expressions of the city’s ever-changing urban fabric.



Jean Shin
Surface Tension 3A and 3B, 2016
Cristin Tierney

Construction panels are the latest in a string of unlikely material—including old clothing, broken umbrellas, losing lottery tickets, and empty prescription bottles—Shin has incorporated into her work. For her, such castoffs reflect the society that uses and discards them. By presenting the panels as diptych and triptych paintings in a gallery, she encourages us to consider the task these barriers performed and what they and their neighborhoods have been through.

—[Karen Kedmey](#)

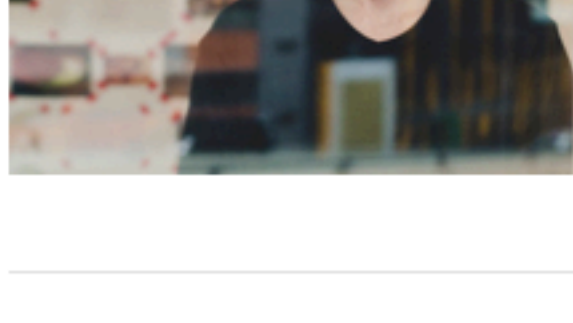
“Jean Shin: Surface Tension” is on view at Cristin Tierney, New York, Feb. 25–Apr. 2, 2016.


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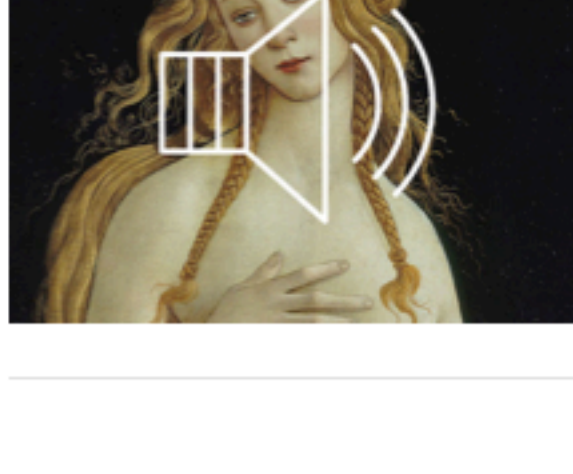
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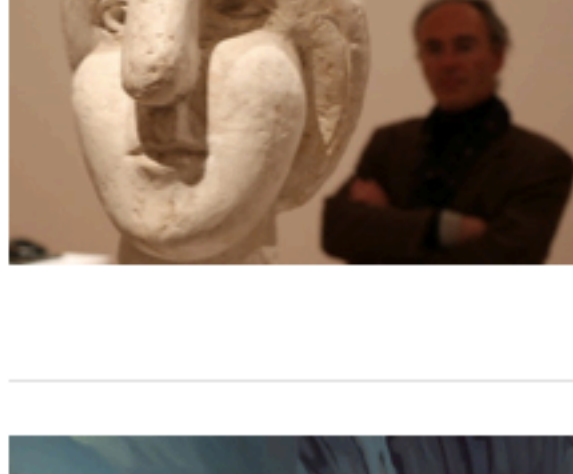


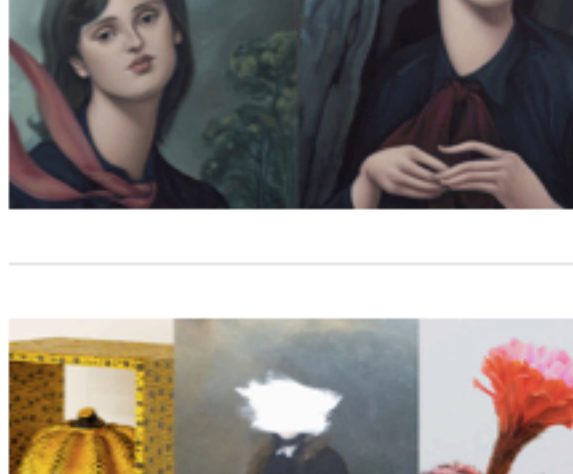
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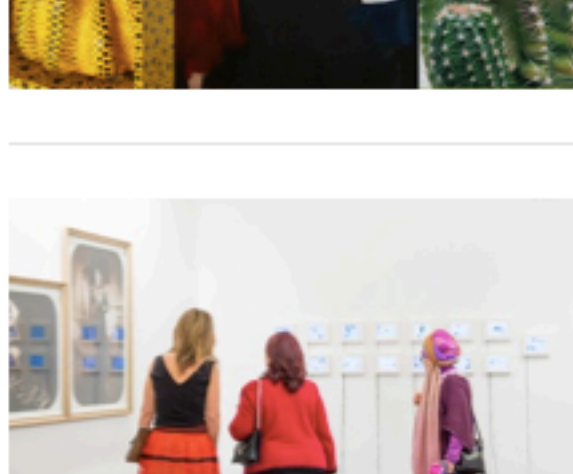
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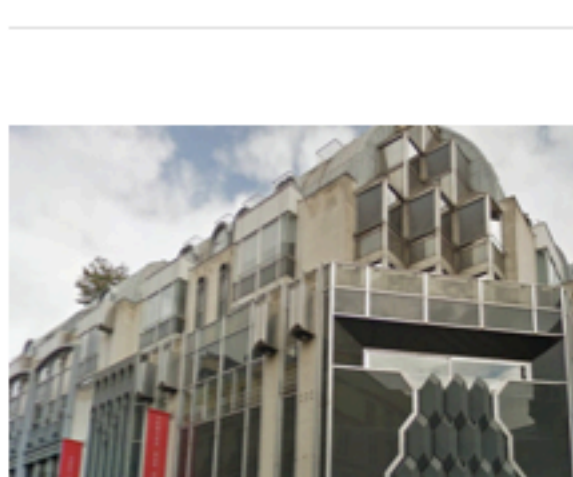
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