

## Feodor Voronov at Mark Moore Gallery

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I walked into Culver City's [Mark Moore Gallery](#) last Saturday a little road weary, which is quite standard here in L.A. I deliberately marched past the front desk and into the spacious main gallery to investigate a giant double canvas that was prominently featured. What I saw was a candy-colored jungle of organized visual chaos: crisp geometric shapes that seem to be made of pulled taffy amid gestural dry-brush strokes, marker-drawn stripes like ribbon candy that abruptly end and become sections of bare, unprimed canvas with thousands of parallel lines obsessively drawn in ballpoint pen. The room was full of such paintings—alive and bright, busy and complex—their lines, textures and materials all so distinctly separate they create the appearance of having been painted on different surfaces, cut out, and glued onto one canvas (this is not so, but the illusion of collage it creates is mesmerizing).



Feodor Voronov. All the Right Moves, 2013; acrylic, marker, ballpoint pen and spray paint on canvas; 62 x 96 in. Courtesy the Artist and Mark Moore Gallery

*Relics* is Feodor Voronov's first large-scale solo show. When I had earlier avoided the front desk, what I was really avoiding was the temptation to grab a list of works and read the titles, which have everything—and nothing—to do with the pieces themselves. I knew that this show was a variation of his trademark Word Paintings, which the artist made by choosing a word almost randomly (by intuition and shape and not meaning or sound) from an online list (“words that will make you sound smart and not pretentious”) and beginning with the word as a formal “armature” onto which he builds the rest of the painting. In *Relics*, Voronov plays with combinations of words overheard or found in his daily life.



Feodor Voronov. *All the Right Moves Detail*, 2013; acrylic, marker, ballpoint pen and spray paint on canvas; 62 x 96 in. Courtesy the Artist and Mark Moore Gallery

Walking around the show, I was overwhelmed by a feeling of joy, which is totally cheesy, but also true. The mixture of chaos and order, geometric and organic shapes and materials as well as the bright colors resonated with something deep inside of me.

And then I realized why these paintings were so cheerily familiar: they reminded me of what it feels like to live in Los Angeles—they are stressful and chaotic and visually stunning. The separate, distinctly defined neighborhoods all reachable (or avoidable) by highway, which Voronov gives us through patterns that snake through each piece, sometimes interacting with and at other times going right over the top of other elements, creating movement. One need only drive down Sunset from Dodger Stadium to the fairy-tale hills of Hollywood to the building-size billboards of West Hollywood to the perfectly manicured city of Beverly Hills all the way out to the temporary rectangular structures they call homes in Malibu to see how

separate these “neighborhoods” really are. Los Angeles is not a single city but fifty cities smashed together, each with their own distinct architecture, design, landscape, and purpose for existing.



Feodor Voronov. Leaving the List, 2013; acrylic, marker, ballpoint pen and spray paint on canvas; 62 x 48 in. Courtesy the Artist and Mark Moore Gallery

Source: <http://dailyserving.com/2013/10/feodor-voronov-at-mark-moore-gallery/>

Going back to the expressly formal elements of this work, these paintings were most successful when the words and letters were obscured. I noticed I was repelled from pieces with easily recognizable forms. And when I finally did get a copy of the titles, I found myself trying to tie the title to the piece in some semantic way and then also found myself wondering if the artist really was so wholly divorced from the meanings of the words or whether their meaning actually did end up informing the shape of the final painting. In the end, the word(s) in the word paintings mean nothing outside of their formal quality and so become distracting if too prominent. I wish I had not even seen the titles. If this work was about the interplay between visual signifier and the meaning it signifies as separate entities, that would be different, but as it is, these paintings are much more about painting than anything else and the use of words a means to an end. As if to prove my point, in attempting to make sense of the show's title, *Relics* (because the work itself does not imply historical artifact or remains), I discovered that the title piece was tucked away, out of the public's view, and inside of the gallery director's office, further underscoring the disparity between title and object.

All semantic and formal discord aside, it is a show of beautiful and evocative work by a master craftsman in the genre of abstract paintings.