

ARTNEWS

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REVIEWS & PREVIEWS

by Harris Rosenstein

Paul Mogensen [Bykert] showed new monochromatic shaped-canvas paintings composed of contiguous rectangles. The basic pattern consists of four constant-height elements progressively doubling in width for a left-to-right expansion. In larger works there is another, identical series underneath expanding from right to left. There are also some vertical and square arrangements. What is crucial, however, is not the serial pattern itself, but that it succeeds in moving the eye across and back along the surface. Thus it avoids the simplistic situation of a color area within a framing contour which, unless it is prevented, tends to a static image. These slight, if interesting, matters of competence aside, the weight of Mogensen's work resides in the relation of size and shape to color and surface qualities ranging from glossy Prussian blue to mat deep greens and light reddish yellows. There is an austere meditative, almost iconic quality in this work, without, however, any sense of the idolatrous. In any case Mogensen is at the furthest extreme from "effects," and remote perhaps even from conveying "feelings." This work might be understood as distillations of art and other visual experience, positing the conception of color as an informative entity that cannot be reduced to information. One can only report that this is not an art-seasonal idea, but an authentic direction which Mogensen is developing in a most promising manner. H.R.