NEWCITY ART

Review: Zak Prekop / Shane Campbell Gallery

Jason Foumberg · 2008



There are literally many ways of seeing the superb abstract canvases that recent Art Institute grad Zak Prekop has on view at Shane Campbell Gallery. Stare at “Yellow Painting” (2008) long enough and you’ll begin to wonder whether small, strangely geometric patches of yellow oil are drowning into, emerging out of, or falling from the sky onto a milky gray surface. Looking away, and then back again, is to see the work entirely anew or, rather, to be deceived over and over again.

Canvases at first seeming entirely blank or monochromatic soon reveal themselves as immaculately detailed and full of color. These same canvases, initially seeming absolutely flat, suddenly give the impression of thickness. The works buzz in your eye, shape-shifting, barely discernible and then suddenly forming into clearer view.

It’s difficult to tell how Prekop has created many of his works just from looking at them, adding to the mystery. It’s equally difficult to describe Prekop’s use of paint accurately without using verbs like ‘scraping’ or ‘dragging,’ because doing so wouldn’t convey just how delicate the work actually appears. There is something both indescribably tactile and expressly melancholy about many of the canvases, particularly the heartbreaking shade of pale blue used for the exhibition standout, “Painted Paper Sculpture” (2008).

It’s perhaps these misapprehensions, contradictions and other ineffable qualities that will compel you, for some unknown reason, to stand very near to the work. (Danny Orendorff)

Zak Prekop shows at Shane Campbell Gallery, 1431 W. Chicago, through January 17.