

ARTCRITICAL PICK: Jack Bush at FreedmanArt



The paintings of Jack Bush were once described by Hilton Kramer as “a garden for the eye,” an apt analogy for images that balance chromatic vibrancy and earthiness. Canada’s participant in Color Field Painting held an obstinate remove from either the geometric hard edges or the ethereal sprays and stains of his confreres south of the border. His paintings impact the retina with a dull thud. Color is intense but somehow un-ingratiating, as if mixed with soot and chalk. The oafishness of his shapes and strokes and the uneasy back and forth between painterliness and pictoriality – foreground gesture and background expanse – make him provincial for the period in which he worked and uncannily relevant for the present. *Sing Sing Sing* (1974) arrays a fluttering string of rough-torn ribbons – an anti-spectrum of anonymous color samples – against an agitated, nauseatingly meat-like, marbled ground. *Beauty and the Beast.* DAVID COHEN

Jack Bush: New York Visit at FreedmanArt, 25 East 73rd Street between Fifth and Madison avenues, (212) 249-2040, February 18 to April 28, 2012. Jack Bush, Sing Sing Sing, 1974. Acrylic on canvas, 68 x 114-3/4 inches. Courtesy of FreedmanArt