

# Art in America

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Eva Lundsager: *Play*, 1996, oil on canvas, 6 feet square; at Jack Tilton.

## Eva Lundsager at Jack Tilton

In Eva Lundsager's recent paintings, abstraction has become a matter of ambivalence. The seven large works in this show mark a striking departure from the artist's previous work. In those jewel-like, 6-inch-square oil-on-wood panels, Lundsager's meticulously worked drips, smears and splotches seemed to take the viewer on a lyrical walk through the woods. Her new works on canvas, which range up to 6 feet in height, offer a deconstruction of those painterly motifs.

In the brooding *Angel*, the deep umber color that is broadly brushed across most of its surface is intensified by high-keyed, complementary strips of red-orange and French blue that peek through. In some passages, the resulting chromatic struggle is given a geometric spin. A yellowish "eye" punctuates the center of a rectangular patch of muddy greens and blues that floats in *Angel*'s midsection; nearby, small dots provide a staccato accompaniment to the thin, horizontal brushstrokes. Meanwhile, the milky cloud that softens the edge of the painting's upper right corner like an insouciant grace note is seemingly defied by the insistent

horizontal and vertical broad strokes that anchor a dirty yellow mass near the opposite edge. Even the breaks between these visual exchanges are eventful, as the paint drips up and down and even weaves tiny webs of drizzled lines. The moody, sylvan ambiance of *Angel* (and similar works like *Glow* and *Play*) immediately conjures allusions to Per Kirkeby's abstract landscapes. Yet the spaciousness and transparency in

Lundsager's works resist such nature references, inviting us instead to attend to the differences between each painterly gesture.

Similar concerns are evident in the light and buoyant *Perch*. Here broad fields of brilliant yellow and yellow-orange, relieved occasionally by dashes of blue and green, seem to converse animatedly with the irregular square confection of ice-cream hues—pink, red, white and yellow—that dangles off-center. The mostly white painting, *Color Home*, consummates both the whimsical spirit of *Perch* and the charged conviction of its darker counterparts. While a rigid yellow band outlines the work's upper right corner, rusty oranges and grays clump together softly toward the lower right. Here, with each isolated mark clearly legible and calculated to be read as such, the viewer's immersion is ultimately converted into cool distance. *Color Home* is a painting that talks about itself without resolution, leaving room for doubt.

—Melanie Mariño