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review

Painting Out of a Corner: Pieter Schoolwerth, 'After Troy,' at Miguel Abreu; Viktor Kopp at Bureau; 'klaer, uglee callamari' at Ramiken Crucible

By Will Heinrich 11/13 6:04pm



Installation view of Viktor Kopp, 'Four Corners' at Bureau. (Courtesy Bureau)

Swedish painter Viktor Kopp's rectangles are archaeologically laborious excavations of the directionality of vision, the tricks and troubles of perspective, and the small-scale, textural possibilities of oil paint. They are also—as if art history had stopped with Surrealism, or if the Second Commandment didn't prohibit but rather required the use of graven images—invariably representational. They undermine the self-importance of abstraction and mock the pretense of figuration simultaneously with lush brown squares of edible-looking chocolate (its paint thickened with wax and highlighted with extra oil), empty windows and old-fashioned wooden doors.

Mr. Kopp's "Four Corners" show at Bureau is comprised of tall and narrow canvases covered with four different kinds of thick white crosshatching. Into each of these four white rectangles, from one of its four corners, protrudes yet another rectangle, this one tilted in perspective like an opening door. In *Grey Corner 1*, for example, it's an upper right corner poking into the painting's lower left. Comprised of bluish-gray, brown and more plastery white, built up into clumps of shiny opacity or thinned to a translucent wash, carefully daubed or manically scribbled, this explosion of effects is made into a simple whole only by the two straight pencil lines that make edges.

If the white background is a gallery wall, is the gray corner a painting or a window? Or is the whole canvas a kind of trick mirror that convinces two people, the painter and the viewer, that they are really looking at each other when they stare into the same opacity? The self-consciousness here is so total, the alienation of the corners' insides from their borders so severe, that it actually flips over into a relaxed self-confidence, leaving all of the rectangles holding nothing but paint.