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Reviews: KF + CM 4EVER

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Chelsea

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Keltie Ferris paints with her own kind of well-informed vengeance, and it gives her abstractions a taut, slightly hard-bitten decorative verve. Her paintings combine a distinctly urban jangle with a slightly tawdry, rather literal inner light, while deftly sampling abstract strategies that range from Frank Stella's stripe paintings through lyrical abstraction to graffiti art.

Built in layers of thin washes, chevrons of bright parallel lines in oil pastel, and strings, grids and explosions of glowing spray-painted nodules, as well as blocked-out areas and bands, these works are often topped with patchy, scraped-down areas that try but fail to assert a strictly vertical plane. Much of their power stems from the way the underlying portions constantly break, leak, flame and peek through, complicating any single spatial read. Sometimes the space tilts inward, which creates the effect of seeing expanses of city lights through low-lying clouds; sometimes the surface expands forward in neon fluorescent froths, a little like fireworks.

Whatever material Ms. Ferris uses, her technique usually involves emphatic parallel gestures that provide an infrastructure of order and method. The surface rhythms evoke both the modernist grid, angled this way and that, and woven textiles, seemingly appliquéd, embroidered or otherwise embellished.

In all, these works involve what could be called fairly high levels of pictorial contamination. One looks forward to Ms. Ferris's upping the ante even more.