

# REGEN PROJECTS

Black, Ezrha Jean. "Sergej Jensen." *Artillery* (September/October 2022) pp. 69–70 [ill.]

## artillery

### Sergej Jensen

#### Regen Projects

By Ezrha Jean Black

In his current show, "The Adult Light," Sergej Jensen seems intent upon demonstrating his capacity for conventional, gestural painting (and for that matter, chromatics), as well as the subtle auto-constructions of stitched and collaged fabrics and pigments he is already known for, though he does this (naturally) in a slightly perverse way. The viewer was immediately confronted with two similarly scaled oil paintings on linen (as distinct from the *sewn* linen—where an approximate grid of irregular fragments of linen or other fabrics are stitched together in some fashion to construct the finished support). Here, Jensen builds up thick brushstrokes of variously pale or bright, light or leaden hues into furry textured specimens we may be persuaded are a *Pink Dog* (all works 2022) and *Blue Dog*. The subject simply confirms the fact of the painting-image.

The gesture here may be both artist's and subject's. Consider a pair of mascaraed shut eyes (in *Pink Dog*) worked over as if for a fashion runway, the charcoal bonbon of a nose wedged between those waves of white fur and an embankment of paws. There are suggestions of that other Jensen in a flourish of pale pink (like a ghosted bird) scraped away from the deeper rose-amber of the background. *Blue Dog* takes a slightly more transitional approach, the dog's undercarriage lost between crisscrossing brushstrokes scarcely differentiated from the blue surround, the eye a mere slit echoing figures in Jensen's more straightforwardly abstract work. That 'slit' recurs elsewhere—most prominently in one of two much larger (by at least 30 inches in height and 20 in width), almost forbidding works with the presence of bronze doors (both Untitled). The seams are pronounced in both, but fewer in the more deeply coppery of the two, where the slit intrudes from the left like a blade. In its darker companion, the seams are embossed-welded into a cage-like grid, as if in black cast iron. Heavy vertical brushstrokes of crimson fingers or flames seem to lick at the grid as if from within this cage, with the associations one would expect given the state of the world.

On more familiar terrain—here, a 'ghosted', vaguely architectural silhouette (a UV-printed image) in eliding shades of rose, lavender and mauve, fading behind a scrim of white, Jensen conveys a sense of impatience with his own repertoire of both subject and technique, titling the work, *Inachevé*—less a description of its finished or unfinished state than a suggestion of what lies beyond it. As it turns out, that's a lot. Jensen moves between dense, richly pigmented, almost neo-expressionist studies, to Rymanesque maximal-minimalist (e.g., what looks like a bone-scan sunk into roughly gridded white stippled linen with glimmers of rose or mauve underpainting), to a slightly Richter-esque *Abstraktes Bild* progression of ridges and washes in half-tone grays and whites. For several of the works, the artist identifies the re-sewn linen as "moneybags." Without verification, it occurred to me that Rihanna (a photograph from one of her concerts provides the image for one of the paintings) would appreciate the specificity.



Sergej Jensen, *Pink Dog*, 2022. Photo by Sergej Jensen, Courtesy Regen Projects.