

# REGEN PROJECTS

Smith, Roberta. "Rebecca Morris." The New York Times (January 6, 2011) [ill.] [online]

*The New York Times*

## Rebecca Morris

*Harris Lieberman  
89 Vandam Street  
South Village  
Through Saturday*

In her first solo exhibition in New York since 2001, Rebecca Morris comes on strong and confident, with six abstract paintings that are all different in a considered, nonironic way. Ms. Morris is not making a postmodern statement about the impossibility of having a style. She is simply exploring the history of abstraction in and around painting and demonstrating that, all things considered, there is plenty of room to move.

Things worth considering in Ms. Morris's view seem to include textiles and ceramics, as well as a relaxed, highly contaminated and referential formalism. Her colors are both thin and shiny, and even metallic; they sometimes bring to mind glazed surfaces while creating a strange atmospheric shimmer. This gives her compositions a visual buzz; they seem almost fugitives, as if about to burn away.

Ms. Morris's loosely applied shapes and areas of color sometimes cohere, forming a skin that covers the entire surface. They do this most strikingly in a silver-on-black painting in which the geometric silhouettes are actually bits of a messier stained surface showing through a thicker, smoother layer of paint. Elsewhere, odd forms are sprinkled about in isolation on white backgrounds, variously suggesting small paintings-within-a-painting; sculptural models; scattered, semi-legible still-life objects; or simple or scratched-out notations.

Some compositions are clearly made by working flat on the floor. In others the method is more ambiguous, especially in the most colorful and elaborate, in which the final patchwork of colors suggests a kind of interior of overlapping paintings, objects and wall hangings. (The arrangement can read as a blurry memory of Charleston, the rural English house that Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and other Bloomsbury regulars created and lived in.)

Altogether, Ms. Morris has got game. Her work could be said to combine Mary Heilmann's rigorous approach to process with Laura Owens's free sense of historical reference; Frank Stella and Richard Tuttle might also be invoked. Either way, her show, like several others in New York galleries over the last few months, indicates the adamant strength of abstract art by women.