

NEW YORK

Sarah Crowner

Nicelle Beauchene Gallery // September 7–October 23

CROWNER'S SOLO SHOW "ACROBAT" takes the renowned modern dancer and choreographer Erick Hawkins as a point of inspiration and departure. A photograph of the young Hawkins executing a leaping spread eagle is at the center of a 2011 gouache collage that gives the exhibition its title, which is spelled out, together with Crowner's name, in the style of a concert poster. The artist uses this photo—taken during a performance of Martha Graham's acclaimed 1947 *Stephen Acrobat*—as a springboard for works that induce thoughts of the balletic, the theatrical, and the performative.

In addition to the collage, the exhibition contains three works—two untitled sets of paintings and a sculpture, all from 2011—each dealing with a separate facet of theatrical performance. The most complex and fluid piece, suggestive of a dance movement, is a group of six pictures lined up on one wall in a neat row and displaying Crowner's signature style of

sewing together cuts of variously treated linen and cotton canvas. Her surfaces are busier than those of Blinky Palermo's fabric paintings but less textural than the textile works of Sergej Jensen. Using both gouache and oil paint, she creates an elegant array of formal relationships within a geometry of lines, shapes, and colors that unifies the sextet. Less ambitious and restricted to a gray scale is a diptych conjuring a vacant stage with curtains drawn and spotlights ablaze, as if an entertainment is about to begin.

The sculpture, *Stage Right, Stage Left*, is composed of eight vertical painted- and stained-wooden elements arranged at different depths on a large square plinth.

In color and form they echo the shapes in the six paintings hanging on the opposite wall. If this is a stage, then these pieces might be props, perhaps dancers. They are unassuming and charming, dwarfed by and yet commanding the platform on which they stand.

One question is whether "Acrobat" portrays elements of theater or is itself theatrical, and here the show's utterly conventional relationship to its audience is a limiting factor. Crowner seems one step away from fully activating that connection with the spectator, but to do so would require her to test out a new form: installation or even performance.

—CS

FROM TOP:
Sarah Crowner
"Untitled," 2011.
Oil and gouache
on sewn canvas,
cloth, and linen,
3½ x 20½ ft.

Daniel Turner
Installation view
of "Mariana"
at the Journal
Gallery, 2011.



NEW YORK

Daniel Turner

The Journal Gallery // September 19–October 23

YOU'D BE FORGIVEN for arriving at this Williamsburg gallery and thinking that you'd just missed the deinstallation of Daniel Turner's site-specific work "Mariana." The space is empty but for the four walls, each smudged with a fading horizon line of gray not unlike marks left behind by now-removed furniture. In fact, the abraded surfaces are the main event: For this, the 28-year-old artist's first show here, he knelt on the floor and used steel-wool pads, held

shoulder height, to scrub and mar the walls' white paint in a gesture halfway between drawing and vandalism, so gently executed that the underlying grain sometimes overrode the pressure of his hand. The resulting smokelike cloud, softer than graphite, is a Whistler-worthy sfumato that tapers and swells, trailing off and coming back again across the sole corner joint, collecting like exhaust on the opposite end of the room. The effect is absorbing: poetic, unsettling,

and oddly beautiful, all the more so for being so simple. Turner's materials vary; the Portsmouth, Virginia, native has used a tray of smoking charcoal to cast soot on seven-foot-tall Plexiglas murals, dipped loosely pleated vinyl curtains in industrial tar, washed Solex glass with iodine, and rubbed iron-oxide powder across a poured-concrete floor. But the steel-wool wall drawings, which have also appeared in Milan and elsewhere, are the most daring of the lot. They are the antithesis of the work of Carl Andre or Richard Serra (alongside whose pieces Turner's rubbings appeared in "Perfect Man II," also this fall, at New York's White Columns): minimalized rather than Minimalist, evacuated. Reduced to the residue of creation, the gallery space in Turner's hands becomes not the art's container but its spent crucible.

—SPH



FROM TOP: SARAH CROWNER AND NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY, NEW YORK; THE JOURNAL GALLERY, NEW YORK