

Miami  
London  
Venice  
Milan  
New York  
Los Angeles  
San Francisco  
International

Art | Review | Film | Music | Architecture | Design | Literature |  
Performance | Style | Politics | Interviews | Top Ten NYC

ABSTRACT SINGULARITY Installation View (detail), Lichtundfire, 2021

## Abstract Singularity

BY JONATHAN GOODMAN

Priska Juschka, co-founder of the gallery Lichtundfire and curator of "Abstract Singularity," is particularly good at putting together group shows of abstract painting. In this exhibition, she maintains her standards. It is hard now to fully commit one's perception to the kind of expressionist abstraction we find in the New York School, but the paintings Juschka shows regularly demonstrate subtlety and skill. The larger question. How much longer can abstraction endure in light of more than a century of exploration?, must be saved for a different discussion. While the query is worthy, it is also true that well-made, lively, and ambitious art is still being produced in this manner. Juschka's roster here is diverse but also joined by a sense of community, in light of the shared commitment to nonobjective painting. Yet the title of the show, "Abstract Singularity," which relates to systems theory according to the press release, also might be read as the recognition of individual achievement, based on the particulars of a vision specifically presented by each artist.

Francie Lyshak's *Revolution* (2020) is a mostly moss-green abstraction, which exposes in the underpainting black strokes, varying in shape, on the top half and similarly formed light-gray marks in the underlying layers on the bottom half. As a painting incurring emotion, it works very

well. One might be bemused by the title—does it describe a circular motion, or does it project a political stance? We remember that the Russian abstract artists of the early 20th century are identified with the communist revolution, so it is not impossible to imagine a political stance advanced by Lyshak's painting. Yet we don't know for sure. In light of the other works in the show, perhaps it makes more sense to see it as a description of movement implied by the black and light-gray brushstrokes. While it is hard to know what the reason is for so bold a name for the painting, we can appreciate its visual verve. Particle Point Collisions, 3.26.2021, by Jim Holl, looks like the visual equivalent of a physics equation: the background is committed to horizontals of yellow-green with lengths of light brown also showing. On top are thin, light-colored vertical columns, spaced equidistantly across the composition; these are accompanied by mostly blue but also light green lines, straight and curved—in the center, set slightly high in the painting is a nearly complete oval, like an eye. It is an elegant abstraction, structured by deliberately distanced markings made on a luminous ground.

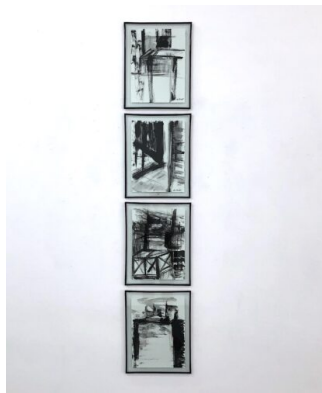
Robert Solomon's *Convergence* (2012), a mixed-media work on paper, is a gray, white, and black painting that consists of a white grid, filled in with gray, with gray/white stripes angled upward toward the right. On top of this design is a group of four targets, each assigned a different quadrant. It is a well-designed, beautifully finished painting, in which the neutral tone of gray becomes both eloquent and moving. Paintings like *Convergence* remind us that abstraction—in this case, the portrayal of signs—can and does maintain a lyricism based on the cogencies of something close to reason—even if the art is expressionistically driven. Augustus Goertz's *Blue Blood Forcefield I* (2021) is a trompe l'oeil diptych painting, the two-panel-effect created with paint, that looks as if there is one half on top of the other. The upper part of the piece consists of a large blue blot, on top of which are red circular drips, while underneath, the second composition occurs as a slate-blue mass, beneath which are two red masses, which balance and support the blue configuration above them. As always, Goertz finds influence in abstract expressionism, but at the same time, he gives his imagery a control and even a constraint that keeps an order within the picture. His use of color in this picture is particularly strong.



ROBERT SOLOMON  
*CONVERGENCE*, 2012 Chalk,  
aniline dye, graphite, metal powder  
on paper 30 x 40 in (paper size)  
Courtesy Lichtundfire, 2021

Gretl Bauer's 2020 work, *Early Snow*, is composed of crumpled paper and wash on canvas. In this work, a piece of crumpled paper, set into the canvas but extending outward beyond it, is found in the center of the composition. A silver color is predominant in the paper, while around it, on the canvas, are streaks of darker color—brown and black. An excellent low relief, *Early Snow* occupies the space that exists between a painting and a sculpture. The work shows an unusual balance between two and three dimensions, in ways that complete the balance rather than undermine it. By breaking the flat plane that defines the painting, Bauer offers us a complex surface, one given to a creative disruption. Thomas Piekunka's work, *Lojong 7* (2020), a painting freed from its traditional formal state on canvas, is a long, thin double thread of a painting, one black and one pink, hanging high up on a hook off the wall and then traveling down the wall to rest on the floor of the gallery. This work, poised between an unusually shaped painting and a physical object, finds its originality in the ambiguous form it occupies. *Lojong 7* reminds us that the boundaries between sculpture and painting are rapidly breaking down, if this has not already happened. Hybridity of form is now an entirely acceptable art stratagem, something that Piekunka makes use of extremely well in this work.

Cheryl Safren's *Strata* (2017) is created entirely with chemistry on copper. The title describes the image exactly: a large dark brown layer,



VIAN BORCHERT From Top to Bottom: COUNTER CEILING, 2021 BUILDINGS, 2021 WINDY CITY, 2021 ROOFTOP DREAMS, 2021 Watercolor and acrylic on watercolor archival paper 12 x 9 in. Courtesy Lichtundfire, 2021



JIM HOLL PARTICLE POINT COLLISIONS, 3.26.2021 Oil on board 24 x 24 in Courtesy Lichtundfire, 2021



CHERYL SAFREN STRATA, 2017 Chemistry on copper 24 x 36 in. Courtesy Lichtundfire, 2021

underneath which is a colorfully mottled, thinner layer. All colors and shades of brown are entirely created by chemical reactions. It might also look like a mountain by the shore of the sea. The associations we make with the image are based on Safren's ability to infuse it with multivalent meaning. There are works like this whose interpretation can go in a number of directions, and the inchoate nature of her forms leads us to pick and choose among a number of possibilities. Also, the fidelity of the image to nature large and small makes it clear how fertile the natural world is in terms of possible readings. Vian Borchert's 2021 suite of black-and-white paintings—from top to bottom, Counter Ceiling, Buildings, Windy City, Rooftop Dreams—present urban scenes in black on a white background. Urban structures—right-angled building forms—are partially rendered, creating a language of nearly visionary architecture. Sometimes, in small passages in parts of paintings, something free-flowing and abstract, not unlike the effects of a Franz Kline work, emerges. These works capture the spirit of urban life in memorable ways. When an artist like Borchert calls upon what she actually sees, she also has a habit of making it a bit more dramatic than life. The results are, as the title of the show says, "singular."

"Abstract Singularity" is an excellent show devoted to the diverse abstract expressions of a group of talented artists. It is also true that the exhibition hangs together well as a whole, indicating Juschka's skill in putting together art that is related despite differences in details and forms. Her overarching gaze is evident in the way the paintings relate to each other. This is not easily accomplished, especially in a group of seven different artists. As she usually does, Juschka leans in the direction of abstraction, although this does not happen entirely. As time goes on, the future of abstraction may be in more difficult circumstances than we might imagine. It has become the lingua franca of contemporary art, but that means we are conditioned to summarily accept its strengths as a given. So a bit of a critical eye in regard to the genre might well be necessary. In the meantime, though, we can appreciate the curator's astute recognition of echoes and similarities in works that might seem, at first, to stand very much apart. To her credit, Juschka finds the means to bind disparate sensibilities into a stylistic whole that is skilled, energetic, and compelling.

Jonathan Goodman




---

Posted in [Art](#)

Website:

Email: [kingsbridgeartwriter@gmail.com](mailto:kingsbridgeartwriter@gmail.com)



CHECK OUT ART511 MAG UK Special Edition

[ABOUT](#) [CONTACT](#) [PERMISSIONS](#) [MEDIA KIT](#) [PRESS](#) [AD SPONSORS](#) [PRIVACY USE](#) [INVESTOR RELATIONS](#) [SUBMIT YOUR WORK](#)  
[GIFT SHOP](#)

ART511 Magazine  
526 West 26th  
Street  
New York, NY  
10001  
(212) 242-1909

[Miami](#) | [London](#) | [Venice](#) | [Milan](#) | [New York](#) | [Los Angeles](#) | [San Francisco](#) | [Login](#)

© 2022, Art511 Magazine. All rights reserved.

