

The More and the Less of Laurel Smith By Monika Burman



There is a more and a less to the work of Laurel Smith. The more is about extending Minimalism into the 21st century. The less (or LS) of Laurel Smith is about her new show, LS is More, at Peak Gallery through February 19th, 2006.

American Painter Frank Stella famously characterized the Minimalist art movement with the phrase "What you see, is what you see". Minimalism is typically defined by its reductive style, reducing a work of art to the minimum number of colors, values, shapes, lines and textures. Beginning with Russian Constructivists at the turn of the 20th century, the Minimalist movement grew roots in the West in the 1960's. The stripped down, elemental, fundamental style creates immediate visual impact without any particular representational form. Smith's new body of work extends the Minimalist concept into today's digital age of excess. As Smith herself says, "I believe that minimal painting today is more vibrant and relevant than ever before".

The LS is More series is based on pantone colors, each with a unique formulation suggested by reductive titles like "Kerf 1235C230C:812". The paintings are presented as large rectangular color-chips; linear bands of color that stretch beyond the borders of the canvas by emitting an intense halo when installed. Each work seems to have an inner light source, seeming to float on the wall, even as the depth of color brings a weighty quality to the paintings.



The radiance and glow of Smith's painted surfaces comes from a process of layering over 20 glazes onto plexiglas. The subtle fades, blur and wear of each glaze on top of the other create the richness in simplistic form identified with Minimalism, and certainly a characteristic of Smith's work.

Laurel Smith is a 2005 Canada Council award winner, having studied at Concordia University and the Alberta College of Art and Design. Her work is held in notable public and private collections including the Visby Kunst Museum, Sweden; Glenbow Museum, Calgary Canada; RBC Investments, Toronto, Canada; and the University of Calgary, Canada. She lives and works in Calgary, Alberta, where she was born.

LS is More by Laurel Smith, Through February 19, 2006

Peak Gallery, 23 Morrow Avenue, Toronto, ON, www.peakgallery.com

This page top: 'Kerf 151C230C:812', Acrylic on Plexiglas, 2006, 20.3x61cm (8x24")

This page bottom: 'Kerf 383C144183C:811', Acrylic on Plexiglas, 2006, 20.3x61cm (8x24")

Previous page: 'Kerf 413U284U:812', Acrylic on Plexiglas, 2006, 20.3x61cm (8x24")

