



### **Richard Stout: Naü-haus 2008 Survey Exhibition**

- **When: Noon-5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday or by appointment**
- **Where: Naü-haus, 223 E. 11th; 832-618-1845**

Sequence: Susanne Ackermann & Rossana Martinez

- **When: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. today-Saturday**
- **Where: Gallery Sonja Roesch, 2309 Caroline; 713-659-5424**

I missed last year's exhibit of early works by Houston abstract painters Richard Stout and Jack Boynton at William Reaves Fine Art, and I've been kicking myself ever since.

Studying that catalog, I thought Stout's best work ranked in the upper tier of what second-generation abstract expressionists put out in their often-overlooked heyday. Reproductions can be deceiving, but 1957, in particular, looked like a magical year.

Judging from Stout's works at Naü-haus, the last year or so hasn't treated him too shabbily either. Their imagery plays with line, color and space, often hinting at landscape, still life or geometric associations while remaining first and foremost about painting itself.

I should mention that technically, the Naü-haus 2008 Survey Exhibition is a group show — a sleepy summertime shout-out to artists who have worked with Texas Collaborative Arts, Dan Mitchell Allison's printmaking studio, or shown at Naü-haus, the exhibition space Allison opened a year ago.

But Stout's paintings are so fresh and exuberant that I'm having a little difficulty remembering what else I saw. He's hijacked this show. It belongs to him.

That may explain why Allison, who usually packs the gallery floor to ceiling with as many works as he can squeeze in without inducing claustrophobia, dialed back this time, opting for a conventional room-to-breathe hanging strategy.

Less conventional was Allison's decision to mount each of Stout's medium-to-large canvases — there are a couple of small ones as well — on a pair of modified two-by-fours that are nailed to the wall.

This makes Stout's paintings thrust off the wall into the viewer's space, casting dramatic shadows, all but shouting "ta-da!" as they add a theatrical flourish to an otherwise low-key celebration of Naü-haus' first anniversary.

With this installation, Allison has done right by Stout, who in turn continues to do Houston and abstraction proud.

Sequence

Line and rigor carry the day in Sequence, an apt pairing of colored-pencil drawings by Susanne Ackermann and Rossana Martinez at Gallery Sonja Roesch.

Ackermann, a German artist, uses a disciplined, repetitive process, laying down line after line to create gridlike or wavy patterns of color. Using surfaces such as mylar or medium-density fiberboard adds a slight fuzziness to her otherwise crisp line without compromising its precision.

The Puerto Rico-born, Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Martinez's works aren't so much drawings as performances using common materials, according to rossanamartinez.com. In this case, the materials include paper, colored pencils and thread, which she uses to create horizon lines that run through oceans of circles or thickets of diagonals.

In another piece, a trail of blue fabrics creates a meandering line that extends from a corner out into the room. The gallery has a Plexiglas box of balloons on display as a souvenir from a previous performance/installation by Martinez.

Ackermann and Martinez have careers worth watching. We're lucky Roesch has brought their work to Houston.

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