

Joe Fyfe

James Graham & Sons

With his blocky, minimalist paintings—made by collaging squares of colored fabric—Joe Fyfe pushed abstraction into a more physical realm. For this streamlined yet spirited show, he used a “palette” of muslin, cotton, felt, silk, burlap, and even the occasional festive print or cotton appliqué to turn the otherwise ascetic appearance of minimal color forms into a grab bag of textures and sensations. In *Marktplatz* (2008–9) swaths of orange, gray, red, and polka-dotted rose dance in a stripy flag configuration, while *Square Curtain* (2007)—a sheath of bright blue appliqué-spangled fabric—droops from the wall like a pair of baggy drawers.

The strongest paintings here, though, were both more restrained and, even at two feet tall, more monumental. For these meditative pieces, featuring simple, boxy shapes, the artist limited himself to an earthy palette of warm brown and beige. *Nun* (2007), for instance, is dominated by a dog-eared brown square that nearly fills the frame, its edges muddy and ethereal, like a Rothko in miniature. But what seems immaterial in



Joe Fyfe, *Large Window with Pink*, 2008, dyed cotton, felt, and silk burlap, 30" x 26". James Graham & Sons.

a Rothko is wholly physical in a Fyfe: Rothko's soft, fuzzy borders blending beige and brown were here simply the

frayed edges of brown cotton fabric. Rothko's ethereal boundary is, for Fyfe, a hemline.

Fyfe goes one step further in the playful *Bed* (2007). Divided into rectangles of brown cotton on top and beige muslin on bottom, the work would be unambiguously abstract if it weren't for the slight layering of muslin over cotton. With its frays pointing pertly up, the muslin reads seductively like the trim of a sheet stretched up to reach a pillow.

—Lamar Clarkson



Nathan Farb, *Weller Pond Outlet*, 1989, C-print, 29 3/4" x 37". D. Wigmore Fine Art.

'Adirondack Art Today'

D. Wigmore Fine Art

Untrammelled wilderness is the star of this show about New York's Adirondacks region (on view through the 6th of this month). The 30 works, by painters Paul Matthews, Thomas Paquette, and Don Wynn and photographer Nathan Farb, range from sweeping vistas and quiet forest scenes to interiors and still lifes. But the works that speak most memorably of the Adirondacks are the landscapes—the woodland ponds, snowcapped peaks, and tumultuous thunderheads of upstate New York.

Carrying a large-format camera, Farb backpacked through miles of terrain to capture his ripe images of nature in flux.

The saturated color and sharp detail of his Cibachrome prints draw us deep into the wilderness. In the 48-by-62-inch *Glasby Pond* (1985), pale light falls on chartreuse moss, rendering it as tactile as a sponge, and the camera's lens catches the texture of every tree trunk. Farb's sunrise study *Weller Pond Outlet* (1989) pulls your eye over the water, with its red and green lily pads, but also suggests the pond's silt bottom and its netherworld of algae and pollywogs.

The muted colors of Paquette's oil paintings offer a flatter take on similar views. His meticulously rendered *Landmark Tree* (2008), in blue-grays, soft greens, and yellows, might have been constructed by an Arts and Crafts carpenter. Wynn's domesticated landscapes, still lifes, and interiors take a nostalgic approach—most beautifully in *Lake at Sunset* (2008), a dreamy sonata of blues, greens, and lavenders. Matthews, sometimes a provocative painter of portraits and life studies, goes here for classic romanticism in his canvases of dramatic clouds over snowy mountains. Like the others in this show, he offers us the Adirondacks we always imagined.

—Mona Molarsky

Daniel Mascret

Gitterman

This compact, elegantly mounted show seemed at first like a survey of styles of French and American photography from the early- to mid-20th century. There