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Art in Review

'Same Sight Slighter'

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"The Same Sight Slighter" gathers together small, delicate and unassuming works while taking its title from "Tender Buttons," Gertrude Stein's 1914 prose-poem inventory of easy-to-miss moments of transcendence. Both title and works seem predicated on opening art viewing and possibly world viewing to the subtle, the transitory and the unexpected.

The seven artists range in age, but all pursue what might be called (to paraphrase Clement Greenberg) "homeless painterliness," a use of odd materials and unorthodox methods whereby delicate gestures and colors are insinuated within but also around or at some distance from conventional painting.

The German Minimalist sculptor Charlotte Posenenske (1930-1985) is represented by two acrylic-on-paper paintings whose fragmentary strands of brushstrokes may or may not add up to figures on a beach. Both Heather Guertin and Bianca Beck work small and, in Ms. Beck's case, sometimes violently, to bring new concentration and energy to the time-tested notion of the monochromatic field.

Clément Rodzielski is also oriented to small fields, painting with Joan Mitchell abandon on the backs of three copies of a little magazine called May that are displayed on pedestals. Alexandra Bircken works in the round, proposing a hybrid of painting and sculpture as a tightly wound package made from cardboard, fabric, Legos, various small objects and red-orange acrylic. B. Wurtz, by now a master of the unassuming, if not completely disguised artwork, makes a cross from wood dowels and hangs on it a piece of fabric, a bit of wood and two shoelaces. They are joined by a plastic bag that seems to hold on desperately with both hands, adding an unexpected emotional urgency.

Josh Tonsfeldt contributes a sculpture consisting mainly of a flower branch whose leaves and petals vibrate almost silently, thanks to a subwoofer, like a group of sensitive brushstrokes looking for a place to land. In all, I think Stein would have been very pleased.

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