

## REVIEWS

### JOHN DIVOLA WALLSPACE - NEW YORK



Above: JOHN DIVOLA, "As Far As I Could Get (10 Seconds)," 1996. Archival pigment print on rag paper, 163 x 112 cm. Right: JOHN DIVOLA, *Dogs Chasing My Car in the Desert*, 1996-2001. Gelatin silver paper, 39 x 58 cm (each). Both courtesy the artist and Wallspace, New York.

As the art industry's youth craze of the last decade wanes, enthusiasts are afforded the opportunity to view the more storied oeuvres of older practitioners, such as 62-year-old John Divola's exhibition comprising selections culled from several series of photographs produced during the early '70s through to the present day. He employs a range of printing techniques in like-sized and framed suites of

two to seven. Three large (163 x 112 cm) grainy archival pigment prints on rag paper from the series "As Far As I Could Get (10 Seconds)" (1996) depict the artist in a southwestern American landscape, running as far away from the camera as he can get in ten seconds. The "Vandalism Series" (1974) of vintage gelatin silver prints looks at dilapidated interiors of abandoned houses where Divola spray-painted simple patterns on the walls. Performative themes pervade much of his work. There are also more strictly documentary studies of mundane subjects imbued with a touch of wry humor such as five small black-and-white portraits of women with beehive hairdos watering their lawns in West San Fernando Valley, California, in 1974. And, there are some pictures of dogs too. A quadrant of blurry shots of dogs chasing the artist's car in the desert. The show ends with another dog peering over a cement block wall wearing a really odd expression on his canine countenance.

What differentiates Divola's areas of interest — including his architectural interventions, or as he calls them, "manipulated environments" — from his perhaps better-known counterparts

such as Gordon Matta-Clark, Richard Prince (think of his celebrated *Second House* project) or even Bruce Nauman (in his early Fluxus experiments) is not chronology — who did what when — but that Divola's primary focus is that of a photographer engaging in various actions rather than a conceptual artist who photographs his activities. This is clearly evidenced by the nature and quality of his attractive photographs, which have formal artistic merit and beauty of their own accord.

*Christopher Hart Chambers*



### ALLISON MILLER ACME. - LOS ANGELES



Allison Miller's exhibition at ACME. embraces transformation as a vital and uncompromising force. The new paintings, oil and acrylic on canvas, are "complicated" in the very best sense of the word as each builds upon

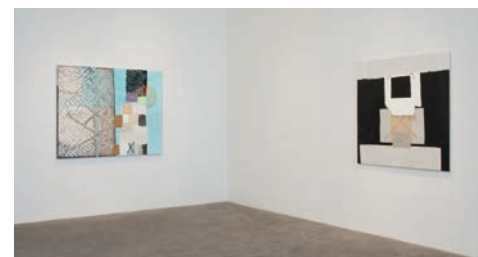
a rich and complex visual trajectory.

*Diptych* (2011) exemplifies Miller's use of patterning almost as if it were a linguistic device. Here what appears to be a scrim of patterned lines breaks away, extending beyond the boundary between the two distinct sections of the painting. It's almost as if a private dialogue were overheard, the right side "listening in" even as the left side encroaches further into the body of the other. Other works like the enigmatic *Elephant* (2011) suggest the presence through shape and line of some sort of living being — a highly subjective perception as the central ground in the painting gives way to absence. The white, empty space carries the work and gives it substantive power while, within the black hemispheres at the top and bottom of the picture plane, the patterning takes on the repetition of language and frame the white space in the center; strange shapes emerge like cells in the human body, communing in their own private floating universe. Other works posit a clearer and more comprehensive communication as in the luminous *Actor* (2011) where the squares strangely duplicate each other, one

seemingly growing out from another. The title itself suggests its own linguistic paradigm as the squares mimic one another yet stand as separate units all their own. Again the background breaks into the central image, which creates another disruption not only of the literal space of the image itself, but also of the narrative implied between the two shapes.

Are we standing witness to a love affair with the self or is this an out-of-body experience? Either way, Miller's images impose themselves gracefully and with tremendous power.

*Eve Wood*



Above: ALLISON MILLER. Installation view at ACME., Los Angeles, 2011. Left: ALLISON MILLER, *Elephant*, 2011. Oil, acrylic and gesso on canvas, 74 x 66 cm. Courtesy the artist and ACME., Los Angeles.