

The New York Times

“Painters Reply”, The New York Times, July 31, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/31/arts/design/new-york-galleries-what-to-see-right-now.html?auth=login-google>.

‘Painters Reply’

Through Aug. 9. Lisson Gallery, 504 West 24th Street, Manhattan; 212-505-6431, lissongallery.com.

Among the current crop of summer shows devoted to painting, “Painters Reply: Experimental Painting in the 1970s and Now” is a standout. Taking its name and conceit from a 1975 special issue of Artforum magazine, in which artists responded to a questionnaire about the state of the medium, the show, at Lisson Gallery, suggests the rich range of possibilities in which past and present experimental painting practices merge.

Joe Overstreet’s 1972 unstretched, untitled canvas unfurls from the wall in a similar fashion to Eric N. Mack’s “Pelle Pelle” (2017), which is made with a microfiber blanket, polyester fabric and silk curtains tacked to the wall. Paintings and assemblages from the ’70s based on the grid by Joan Snyder, Howardena Pindell, Sean Scully and Al Loving sit comfortably next to more recent riffs on geometry by Sadie Benning, Matt Connors and Dona Nelson.

Lynda Benglis’s poured polyurethane from the late ’60s is here, and there are notable paintings by Stanley Whitney and Ron Gorchov from the ’70s; a divine Dorothea Rockburne from the ’80s; a post-punk black and white canvas by Steven Parrino from the ’90s; and a printed-fabric painting by Ruth Root from last year. The point of the conversation becomes clear: Painting came off the wall in the 20th century, became non-rectilinear, and not even reliant on paint. As a result, a simple way of pigeonholing painting became impossible. What’s “old” can look “new,” and vice versa. What’s important is that it offers a credible reply to the open-ended question of “what is?” or “why more?” painting. MARTHA SCHWENDENER