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## Carrie Moyer

The Stone Age, New Paintings

Canada  
55 Chrystie Street, near Hester  
Street, Lower East Side  
Through Feb. 11

Carrie Moyer's paintings are bracing blasts from several pasts and look surprisingly contemporary because of the deliberation with which they are made. Starting with the elegant earthiness of raw, unbleached canvas, Ms. Moyer builds thin, levitating strata of contrasting colors, forms and techniques, each with its own set of historical, stylistic and physical references.

Crisp shapes and negative silhouettes often evoke prehistoric goddess statues, rock formations or ceramic vessels. Translucent pours of color suggest natural streams, menstrual blood and the male-dominated history of formalist painting, while textures applied in expanses of hand or finger prints allude to cave paintings but also to 1970s feminism (especially the hand-printed paintings of Harmony Hammond).

Throughout, 1980s appropriation strategies, especially as they descend from Philip Taaffe, are pulverized and recast. In "Furbelow," Ms. Moyer brings out the inner goddess of a curving Jomon period Japanese vase by adding hints of nipples to its top. Meanwhile "Old Flame," an ancient brazier that is also a figure, is engulfed in a slow burn of color that suggests unquenched desire.

Ms. Moyer shares her penchant for precision layering with Stephen Mueller and her ambiguous figurative abstraction with Nicola Tyson. The combination of weightlessness and inner light is more singular and almost photographic in effect; it announces that everything is on purpose and accents a pervasive feminism that is both primordial and ineffably elegant.

There's a cautious quality to Ms. Moyer's precision that she will need to face, but for the moment the sense of looking all the way through to the back of her paintings, and deep into history, is very impressive.

ROBERTA SMITH