

Carrie Moyer, "Arcana"

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Canada, through June 7 (see Lower East Side)

Acrylic isn't known for being lush, but in Carrie Moyer's new show at Canada, the veteran painter conflates the medium's slight coolness with allusive, undulating figurations whose emotionally charged forms seem born directly from the free associations of Surrealism. The result is a sort of mind-gut interplay between postmodernism and modernism.

These works are a palimpsest of a finely calibrated system of creation and destruction. Moyer has harnessed gravity and accumulation into a dance whereby elements seem to emerge as much from physics as they do from art history: Her approach rests on physical occurrences that are endemic to the paint itself as well as to the actions upon it. The surface is often caked with glitter and marked by sanded, mottled swaths whose patterns make a nod to Formica and the swirled polymers of decorative jewelry. It is refreshing and thrilling to see these manipulations in a medium that's used often, but used *well* so infrequently.



In *Ballet Mécanique*, tiny protrusions from one of the main bodies could be breasts with miniature nipples; many of the central forms in these works are both phallic and feminine. The shiny black impasto at the top of *Rebus* alludes to the irreversibility of tar. There's a viscosity to the material, a sense of stick-to-itiveness, that suggests the physical corollary to a lifetime dedicated to painting—an appropriate metaphor for this handsome body of work.—*T.J. Carlin*