

CHICAGO

Anoka Faruqee and David Driscoll at Zolla/Lieberman

The abstract paintings of Anoka Faruqee and David Driscoll pay homage to certain strains of high modernist painting (Minimalism, the Color Field school, Pattern and Decoration), while subjecting their medium to personal systems and creative techniques that challenge painting's dependency on the handmade mark.

Faruqee's works, presented as diptychs, luxuriate in color and optical effect. (Several small studies on paper were also on

view.) Issues of authenticity and pictorial reproduction play out in the so-called "pour" paintings (flashe on linen on panel). Each grouping contains an "original" composition and its twin (sometimes with slight alterations in scale), in which every stroke, every hue is replicated by hand with painstaking perfection. Here the artist transfers the spontaneous pours created in the first painting onto the second panel by means of a grid. First, she color-matches the paint—a rich palette of greens, yellows and blues—then assigns each cell a fragment of visual information. The resulting copy is, in essence, both a near duplicate and its own original.

In several acrylic works that consist primarily of vibrant patterns of vertical stripes, Faruqee pairs various opposites. For instance, a range of hot blue zips made with straight lines in one panel is rendered wavy in its sibling, or bands painted "in focus" in one painting are made blurry in the next. Other works are built from patterns of interlocking asterisks that pulsate with rhythm and color. Faruqee's use of grids and repetitive hard-edge forms is influenced by computer technologies, as well as weaving and Islamic tiling. Although her paintings appear digitized, they retain a sense of human touch.

Driscoll's works, more subdued in tone, also seem derived from electronic, even photographic, sources, but result instead from a series of chemical processes far removed from the artist's hand. According to a statement, Driscoll places his large panels within a sealed tank, then mixes oil paints with solvents and binders that are poured onto the canvases in thin layers. This chemistry produces a sequence of ripples and pools on the surfaces, a topography (in warm browns, grays and reds) that resembles a lunar landscape or geological formation. Despite these illusionistic effects, the paintings (through a complex system of refinement) remain unequivocally flat. Thus the viewer is left to distinguish reality from fiction. Driscoll's removed participation

suggests that painting has an "inherent order" (as the exhibition was titled), one that challenges notions of intuitive play. This dialectic between painting's production/reproduction and its materiality forms the basis of Faruqee's and Driscoll's compelling work. Both reactivate, whether through the act of comparison or simple wonder, the pleasure of looking.

—Susan Snodgrass



David Driscoll: *Red, Grey, Green*, 2004, oil on canvas on panel, 44 inches square; at Zolla/Lieberman.

Anoka Faruqee: *Pour Painting and Copy*, 2002, flashe on linen on panel, 34 by 30½ inches and 45 by 41 inches; at Zolla/Lieberman.

