



## Looking Through Trees

by Zachary Royer Scholz

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Looking Through Trees, Pamela Jordan's first solo exhibition with Romer Young Gallery, presents a group of paintings whose subtle complexity requires prolonged and ideally repeated viewing.

The majority of the paintings exhibited showcase the characteristic style that Jordan has crystallized over the last few years. In such works as *Fragments of blue dense* (2011) and *Quarry* (2011), Jordan uses angular streaks and arching sweeps of paint to create dense, tangled webs, whose fractal energy not only bursts, but also quietly shimmers. Painted on darkly dyed canvas, these pieces are ingeniously anchored by bleach under-painting. The resulting batik-like marks inform the placement of Jordan's overlaying brushwork and provide some of the paintings' most poetic moments. Jordan's palette centers on a bruise-like mix of blues, purples, and blacks, but she deftly orchestrates these otherwise somber hues to produce tones that are tranquil rather than dour—more like open expanses of night sky than funereal shrouds.

Diverging from the main group of works are two symmetrically structured paintings, entitled *Smoke* and *Vega* (both 2011). Their geometric stability nicely balances the amorphous energy present in Jordan's other paintings and creates a dialogue that expands the show's otherwise tight boundaries. In these paintings, as in her signature style, Jordan's playfully angular brushwork retains much of drawing's immediacy, while simultaneously exploiting paint's viscose potential. Triangular edges fade and bounce into one another, creating shifting relationships that evade fixed comprehension. Jordan's nuanced compositions rub against each other, causing energy to pool in these works until it leaks into the gallery space and contrasting nicely with the way her other paintings seem to recede infinitely.

Considered in relation to one another, the paintings in *Looking Through Trees* make it clear that Jordan's title is metaphorical if not philosophical. While the fragmentary forms in some of the works could be seen as abstract foliage, they more accurately embody mediated perception. Like flickering light passing through leaves, Jordan's paintings present a subjective and perpetually moving target. They create fleeting perceptions that elude memory but leave ghostly traces in their wake.