

- [Home](#)
- [Archive](#)
- [Galleries & Museums](#)
- [ABOUT](#)

Enter your search keyword

SQUARECYLINDER.com

northern california art



- [Interviews](#)
- [Profiles](#)
- [Reviews](#)
 - [Painting](#)
 - [Photography](#)
- [Special Reports](#)
- [Top Stories](#)

[Categorized /](#) [Reviews, Top Stories](#)

Paper/Mylar/Vellum @ Brian Gross

Posted on 10 August 2009



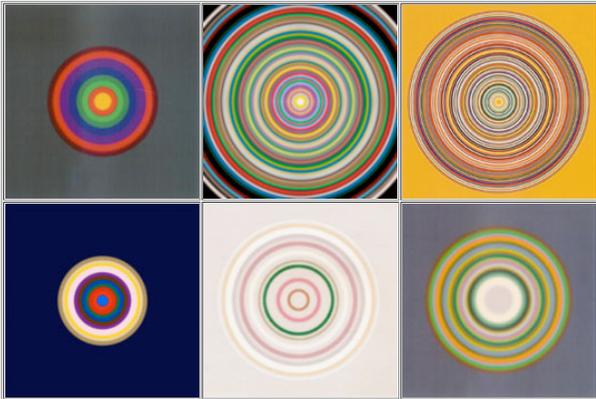
Media aren't really the message in "Paper/Mylar/Vellum", the current group show at [Brian Gross](#); but they're certainly active vehicles of expression for the nine gallery artists whose works are on view. Their sensibilities range from high minimalism and conceptualism to organic abstraction.

[Nellie King Solomon](#) (left) is a leading purveyor of the latter. In "Loud Cloud", an effusive, tightly controlled mixed media painting on mylar, bright colors and biomorphic forms coalesce in luminous overlapping puddles to suggest a hothouse of biological activity rendered in a concoction that, at a distance, looks like tar, egg yolk and silver nitrate. Though the interlocking forms appear to be organic, they feel as artificial as the translucent media on which they appear. And it's precisely that tension, between real-world allusions and overt artificiality that animates the work and ignites positive comparisons to painters like

Nellie King Solomon, "Loud Cloud", 2008, acrylic and mixed media on mylar, 96" x 96"

[Ed Moses](#) whose works also mix precise composition with process accidents.

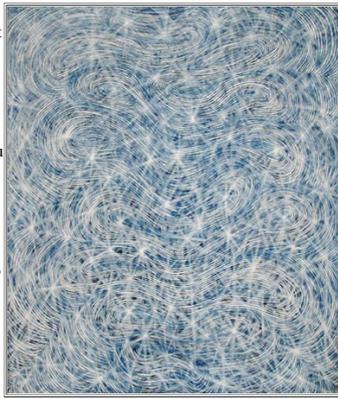
In contrast, [Lewis deSoto's](#) "KLS" series is all about precision. It consists of 10 optically supercharged digital prints built of concentric circles whose intense (and sometimes subdued) hues vibrate like halos from distant stars.



Lewis deSoto, six from the 10-image "KLS Series", 2007, digital prints, 38" x 38"

If you missed the artist's retrospective at the [San Jose Institute for Contemporary Art](#) last fall, which included these pictures, now is the time to make contact. The prints, which occupy an entire wall at the gallery's entrance, could easily be classified as [color field](#) paintings — in league with what [Kenneth Noland](#) did in the late '50s and with what the southern California painter [Gary Lang](#) does today. All three use sensory overload as a portal to higher consciousness. The difference is that deSoto's series has a literary inspiration: [Hermann Hesse's](#) novella "Klingsor's Last Summer," in which the dying protagonist uses painting as a divining rod for life's meaning.

Hesse's descriptions of color are so hyperrealistically vivid that it's easy to see how deSoto, a fellow explorer, got swept up in such a vision, since so much of what he's done in the past has hinged on breaking down barriers between media to realize his ideas. In this case, deSoto drives Hesse's words to their logical conclusion: He downloads from the Internet the dominant colors from each of the book's chapters, and uses those hues to create the circles you see here. Their tonal graduations are as musical as they are visual, so much so that they induce a trance state, not unlike what you experience when you listen to the music of minimalist composers like [Steve Reich](#) and [Philip Glass](#).



Linda Fleming, "Burst", 2009, nupastel on rag paper, 64" x 56 1/2"

They segue nicely into the works of other gallery artists who hew more closely to minimalist ideals. [Robert Jack](#) offers "Untitled (47-2000)", a pencil drawing of tiny cells into which he inserts burn marks – an occupation whose obsessive qualities are shared by [Josh Dov](#). His "Soul Village", an intricately cross-hatched ink drawing, yields a pleasing, iridescent grid of boggling complexity. [Andrea Way's](#) ominously titled "Master Race", a ballpoint pen drawing, is an inscrutable, quilt-like patchwork of shapes (labyrinthine, triangular and star-like) that seems to relate to alchemy. And in "Static # 9", [Stephen Sollins](#) uses correction fluid (aka "white-out") to superimpose circuit board-like geometries onto a piece of faded newsprint that was once a page of TV listings. It's a clever, ironic take on digital's assault on print and broadcast media.



Donald Feasél, "#D31", 1995, watercolor on Dura-lene, 80" x 48"

Working in a more traditional Abex mode, [Donald Feasél](#) applies heavy watercolor to vellum in "#D31"; but unlike Solomon who pours pigment, Feasél scrapes it in thin washes across the surface, leaving plenty of open space for exuberant gestures that yield knotty bulbous shapes, spatters and amorphous blobs, some of which feel like private jokes. The result is some of the wittiest, most alive-looking painting you're likely to see. This one looks like an avalanche, yet it's strangely buoyant.

Sculptor [Linda Fleming](#) — best known for her lattice-like steel sculptures — submits "Burst", a full-on action drawing that reflects her longstanding exploration of cosmic and organic forms. In it, the play of light looks as if it's filtered through the eddies of a stream and been given the tonality of a cyanotype.

Lastly, the conceptualist [Joe Amrhein](#) engages the jargon-laced universe of art criticism in "Textual". It consists of various buzzwords, each in different fonts, laid down on layers of mylar. It's a visually captivating juxtaposition of transparent surfaces and typographies, but it leaves its terminally overripe subject unscathed.



—David M. Roth Joe Amrhein, "Textual", 2009, enamel on mylar with linen tape and metal grommets, 40" x 40"

The goal of "Paper/Mylar/Vellum" was simply to place on view a selection of works from the gallery's estimable stable. That it also happens to be one of the strongest summer group shows in San Francisco is an unexpected surprise.

"Paper/Mylar/Vellum" through August 26, 2009 at [Brian Gross Fine Art](#), SF.

[Share This](#)

This post was written by:

[David Roth](#) - who has written 38 posts on [SquareCylinder.com](#).

Contact the author: art@squarecylinder.com

« [Doug Biggert @ Verge Gallery](#)

One Response to "Paper/Mylar/Vellum @ Brian Gross"

1.  [Frank A. Lostaunau](#) says:
August 10, 2009 at 7:38 p08

<http://www.examiner.com/x-13996-SF-Museum-Examiner-v2009m7d11-John-Baldessari-at-the-Legion> Scroll to Comments at bottom of page.

I'm going to try to take in the the images of Hippy drifters in Sacramento because of your review! Look forward to viewing it. Thanks.

best,

Frank

Trackbacks/Pingbacks