

HK Zamani: "Remembering and Forgetting" at CB1 Gallery

by christopher michno

Nov 2013



Untitled 20

2013

Oil on canvas

11" x 14"

Photo: Jay Oigny

Courtesy the artist and CB1 Gallery

Known as the founder of LA's adventurous POST gallery, HK Zamani is also an adept and versatile artist. In his second solo show at CB1 Gallery, titled "Remembering and Forgetting"--paired here nicely with "Raven," Susan Silas' solo of photographs in CB1's West Gallery--Zamani resumes his investigation of philosophical and visual poetics with 12 new untitled paintings. The remembering and forgetting heralded in the show's title anchors Zamani's painting in an exploration of the ephemera of daily life--objects, scenes, memories--as much as it is reflective of his painting process. One gets the sense that he is feeling his way about, each pass at the canvas suggesting an intimate wash of thought, even a struggle, followed by obliteration--though not entirely--of what was there before. Or perhaps, more accurately, one could say each work examines the new surge of ideas that builds on what was initially set down, as if each canvas represents, not the specifics of thought, but rather the amorphous flood of ideas that storm through the artist's mind.

Zamani's cartoonish shapes and thickly textural brushwork often elicit apt comparisons to the late Philip Guston. Less figurative than Guston's late paintings, Zamani's paintings are filled with largely indeterminate, curvilinear and often clunky shapes that are only sometimes recognizable, flipping curiously between abstraction and almost-representation. *Untitled 20* (2013) resembles the back of a chair pushed up against a table, whereas *Untitled 16* (2013) appears as a couple of dense clouds in blanketed sky. Solid shapes in these works mask the beginnings of other forms that have been obscured by scumbling or otherwise reclaimed in the action of painting, hinting at something just beneath the surface. And, at times, it is more than a hint; plainly visible in the sculptural surface of *Untitled 20*, spindles of white, equally spaced with the black vertical lines, clearly delineate the painter's change in direction. Zamani works by continuous revision. Perhaps it is a struggle to find where one ends the work. It is also a relentless probing of the nature of objects, existence, or thought: an ongoing negotiation with surface and form, content and recognition. In the shapes beneath veils of paint, in the indications of prefatory explorations, Zamani observes streams of thought, strains to capture them, and then covers them as they fade.