

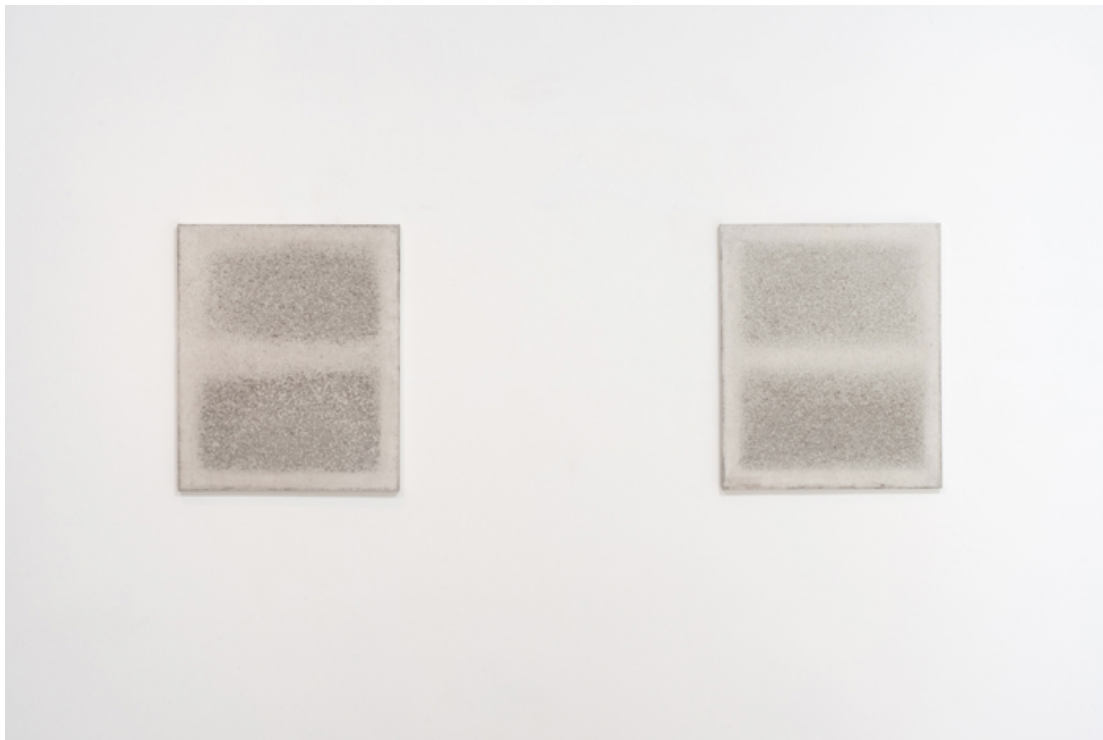
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Marie Jager at Kunsthalle L.A.

By Sharon Mizota

Marie Jager's images may be the quietest ever. The canvases and blueprints, which the L.A. artist creates by simply leaving them outside for stretches of time, are literally impressions of an ephemeral yet omnipresent aspect of city life—its air. The "Pollution paintings" are small gray and white canvases "painted" by gravity and dust. Despite the uniformity of this technique, they do record local differences: Images created in downtown L.A. are denser and darker than a mottled canvas from Chinatown. And while the former appear to have been masked to create a Rothko-esque horizon line, the latter suggests a more delicate Robert Ryman monochrome.



By contrast, images in the "Starter" series are playful takes on splatter paintings. They record the spray of oil emitted when a car is started and reflect a surprising variety: a GMC Savana

creates a large, spreading jellyfish shape, while a Ford Super Duty pickup truck makes a softer, haloed form like a solar eclipse. These references to abstract painting make Jager's environmental commentary seem understated.



Jager's hands-off approach takes a more poetic turn in aerial photographs of the city printed in blueprint ink and left out in the rain. They establish a nice equivalence between rain falling on the image (and blurring it) and rain softening the edges of a city usually bathed in harsh sunlight. The resulting image is nominally a landscape, but it is also a direct record of a fleeting moment. It seems appropriate that images created by polluted air or rain should resemble abstract painting, which has often given shape to the unseen and evanescent.