

# ARTFORUM

## CRITICS' PICKS

### Berlin

### Sergej Jensen

**GALLERIE NEU**  
**Mehringdamm 72**  
**September 10—October 22**

Two thousand eleven has proved to be a volatile year for painting, with the deaths of some of the greatest brush wielders since Picasso (Lucian Freud and Cy Twombly), a return to abstraction, and continuing talk about the dematerialization and despecification of the medium. Sergej Jensen is a not-so-hidden referent here, if only because he continues to work within the framework of painting—extending his fabrics canvaslike on stretchers and hanging them up on the wall—while only occasionally using paint itself, preferring chance and accident in rendering what nonetheless end up looking like deliberate abstract designs. With its twenty works featuring an array of stitches, tattered cloths, oily splats, and found fabrics, this exhibition strives to further articulate the accidental—and hence antigestural—nature of Jensen's practice.

If there is any gesture at work here, then it is as a purely mental process—an underlying tic that reveals the way the exhibition scenario is set up by the artist. In the past, this has involved subtle noninterventions, such as leaving the lighting from the previous exhibition intact, to more galvanized productions—including his last at Galerie Neu, in which he transformed the entire gallery into a chic minimalist living room where it was verboten for gallery employees to do any actual work while on the premises. In the current exhibition, gallery staff accompany visitors on request to a storage shed-cum-exhibition space located in the back of the gallery, where six more of Jensen's paintings have been installed. One can only ponder the possible reasons and implications behind this—there is no sign in the gallery announcing the exhibition's extension, and it is only because I happened to strike up a conversation with a gallery employee that I discovered it. It can only be assumed, then, that the majority of visitors will miss this second half of the exhibition. What a shame. It wouldn't surprise me if the walk to the storage space, with autumn leaves crunching underfoot, were just as important for Jensen as the experience of looking at the paintings.

—Travis Jeppensen



View of "Master of Color" 2011