

# Flash Art

REVIEWS

## SERGEJ JENSEN

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Reviews

### WHITE CUBE — LONDON

"The last twenty minutes of 2001," Sergej Jensen's recent exhibition at the White Cube, is inspired by the finale of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, when David Bowman travels through the infinite by crossing the Star Gate. True to his title, Jensen takes the viewer on a trip to a new dimension; his abstract paintings, mostly displayed in a large underground space accessible through a narrow stairway, are a strange mix of cosmic and domestic. *Deutsche Bank* (2010) is a silvery blue monochrome painted on a canvas made of empty moneybags. *Things they said I saw* (2010) is a similarly toned composition, with a found black-and-white photograph of a veiled woman stuck on a corner, emerging like a spiritual vision. Even the ray of light cutting across *Untitled* (2009) turns out to be a detail of Berlin's monumental television tower, where the studio of the artist is located.



SERGEJ JENSEN, *The White otters of childhood II*, 2010. Nail polish and bleach on sewn cotton, 230 x 170 cm. © the artist. Courtesy White Cube, London. Photo: Lepkowski Sudio, Berlin.

One of the key elements of the exhibition is Jensen's decision to extend the contrast inside his paintings to the gallery. The usually immaculate walls of the white cube are cracked up in two different points, revealing the grid windows and metallic concertinaed door behind. This space disruption, designed to create a reference to the legendary black monolith in *Space Odyssey*, is initially disconcerting, but it generates a clash with the formality of the paintings that unexpectedly takes the show to a new area. Jensen seems to be able to maintain an ironic perspective even in his darkest moments, and this ingredient is what prevents the pairing of painterly abstraction with Kubrick's apocalyptic vision from becoming a dour experience.

Along these lines is also a short film shot by Kerstin Cmelka in Jensen's studio, where he and fellow artist Josef Strau erratically wander around, engaged in a series of nonsensical activities. Part of an ongoing series entitled "Method Living," the film shows an alternative way of 'mapping the studio,' challenging the common conception of it as a shrine of creativity, and offering further evidence of Jensen's multi-dimensional approach.