

# ARTFORUM

## CRITICS' PICKS

### East Hampton

#### "InsideOutsiders"

THE FIREPLACE PROJECT  
851 Springs Fireplace Road  
June 29–July 16

For the past five decades, Mary Heilmann has gleefully presented herself as a sort of outsider—if not as a spirited painter known for irreverently riffing on the modernist grid and Minimalism, then for the communities of surfers, hippies, beatniks, and rockers (to cite a few) that she, at one time or another, has made her own. For this exhibition, which takes the geometry of surfing as its theme, Heilmann has gathered a group of artists that she terms "outsiders": quasi hobbyists who build bodies of work not necessarily intended for public view. She has selected ten of these sorts, all whom live at the end of Long Island, to show their art here. Several attended her alma mater (the University of California, Santa Barbara), and, most significantly, all are surfers.

The works in this show share a studied quality; they all possess geometric systems that are whole and complete, immaculately finished. Sabra Moon Elliot makes tiny paintings that evoke ocean horizon lines and often include a miniature sculpture of a bird perched atop the canvas, which reaffirms the borders of painting—the site where picture becomes object. In Mike Solomon's watercolor *Rip*, 2010, tangles of loose wavy lines cut over each other, creating endless pockets of negative space, obsessive delineations of the insides and outsides of forms. Like surfing, painting is a fluid spatial equation, where calculations of angles and shapes demand a distanced vantage point—swells are best gauged from outside the wake—which perhaps accounts for the polished quality of each work. After all, any seasoned surfer will tell you that the inside, if not navigated with skillful aplomb, is where one gets pounded. It's no surprise that the one work Heilmann contributed to the show, *June Wave*, 2012, seems viciously undone, consisting of four brushy bands of ferociously painted hues that create an image of a most violent and beautiful crash—the culmination of a career forged just beyond the break. The outside lends itself to perspective, which, as proved here, can be honed into sheer intuition: the knowledge of when to ride out the crest or drop into the surf and bounce at the bottom of the wave.



Rick Liss, *Reserved Parking (Wheelchair)*, 2012, acrylic on aluminum and mirror, 12 x 18".

— Allese Thomson Baker