

# TIF SIGFRIDS

## frieze

Issue 31 November-December 1996

### Frances Scholz

GALERIE GABRIELE RIVET , COLOGNE, GERMANY

Recent large-scale exhibitions like 'Der zerbrochene Spiegel' or 'Abenteuer Malerei' bear out the current rise of interest in painting as a medium. While some critics from time to time declare it to be dead, artists still show up, even amongst the younger generation, who give an innovative development to the historical traditions within painting. Frances Scholz is one of Germany's most highly regarded younger painters. Many of the reasons for this are inherent in her work: there's the superior way in which she links rigorous hard-edge painting with free, almost gestural forms; there's the craftsmanlike skill in execution; and the way in which she manages to combine divergent formal elements, while nonetheless managing to establish an authentic position.

Scholz' acrylic paintings frequently show an affinity with film, revealing qualities associated more with the moving picture than with the static image. The pictorial ground seems to flicker as overlaid layers of varnished paint allow the different levels to shimmer through, creating an unfathomable illusion of depth. As the various levels of the image enter into a dialogue, some colours mix, while others separate themselves out, pure in the force of their own radiation, and this suggests there is a chronological dimension to the work.

As a rule, Scholz confines the abstract forms she uses to rectangular, narrow bars, usually running vertically through the picture. The edges of these slim pictorial fields used to be clear, straight lines, but a striking feature of her current work is that they are now irregular and look as though they have been torn apart, undermining the sense of technical perfection established elsewhere. This is a conscious departure, and reduces the importance of the craft aspect in favour of direct 'spontaneity' and a more individual way of finding form. Making the creative process more explicit makes the pictures are easier to engage with.

1507 Wilcox Avenue Los Angeles CA 90028  
T: 323 907 9200 [info@tifsigfrids.com](mailto:info@tifsigfrids.com)

# TIF SIGFRIDS

The various pictorial levels manage to create a spatial quality of the kind normally seen in architectural remains, but which survives effortlessly without a classical perspective structure. In this respect, an analogy can be drawn between the alternating opaque and transparent areas of Scholz's paintings and the way in which glass buildings are perceived: Dan Graham's pavilions, for example, or the glass room Mies van der Rohe designed for the Weissenhof estate in Stuttgart in 1927. Here too, differently coloured glass walls and alternating transparent, semi-transparent and entirely opaque panes of glass produce a diverse range of spatial experiences for the viewer.

The milky, semi-transparent surfaces of Scholz's pictures function in a very similar way and inevitably occasionally create associations with glass. Its contradictory nature glass can give a sense of both proximity and distance, intimacy and coolness, eloquence and reticence applies equally to Scholz' work. This sense of the 'architecturalness' of painting, is also visible in the artist's ability to handle specific spatial situations. Here, the angles, roof protrusions and pillars make the atmosphere of the space very different from the white cube ambience of many galleries. Scholz addresses the potential dominance of the architecture with a series of works created specifically for the exhibition. The landscape format appears for the first time in her work, while several of the familiar portrait format paintings repeat the same basic form: two parallel horizontal lines divided by three parallel vertical lines. In their arrangement, these narrow red bars are reminiscent of a Mondrian composition, but without claiming the precision of his images. Such precision is implied in Scholz's work, but on closer inspection, irregularities and random elements relativise it the painting process seems to have been interrupted. The repetition of the same motif a phenomenon that usually occurs within an individual painting in different pictures of various sizes creates an interplay between the individual works. In this sense, the exhibition can be read as a single piece as one large picture. Its individual images exist as autonomous works, but their effect is measured throughout the installation.

**Yilmaz Dziewior, translated by Michael Robinson**