

ALEXANDRE
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Stephen Westfall

*Lennon, Weinberg
560 Broadway, SoHo
Through Nov. 1*

Every canvas that Stephen Westfall makes is distinctly his own: flat, grid-based, painted with a dry yet sensuous touch in muted comic book colors and defined by cartoon outlines. But within the tightly con-

trolled limits he sets for himself, Mr. Westfall explores a remarkable range of pictorial possibilities. He's practically bubbling over with ideas, and that creates an infectious excitement.

The medium- to medium-large canvases in this exhibition include a vibrant image of colored, triangular pennants hanging in rows on a creamy white field; syncopating colored blocks interrupting horizontal black-on-white lines; a grid of fat, deep purple bands layered over a fine-lined white-on-black grid that is called, somehow appropriately, "Mingus," after the great jazz bassist; and a minimalist landscape of yellow sky and green ground framed by red posts and a lintel of white blocks that gives the effect of gazing out from the front porch of a Buddhist temple.

Mr. Westfall goes too far toward fussy, overly complicated representation in a view through open casement windows to a brick building across the street. But in the larger context of a project that so nicely balances formal control and imaginative unpredictability, it's an entirely forgivable offense.

KEN JOHNSON

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