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Kenny Schachter on Art and Horse-Racing in St. Moritz

by Kenny Schachter  
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In 2004, I visited Jeff Elrod's (b. 1966) studio prior to his participation in a group show curated by Rita Ackermann and Lizzi Bougatsos called "Indigestible Correctness," which was staged in a short-term space I operated in New York's West Village. Jeff pointed out that he met Christopher Wool at the time, who was also in the exhibit and who went on to become an extraordinarily close friend and supporter of the artist. They both have studios in Marfa, Texas.

It could be said that it's a safe bet to present the mid-career painter at Vito Schnabel Gallery, where the show is on view through January 22nd, for the gallery's second season in St. Moritz. Elrod is represented by Max Hetzler in Berlin, Luhring Augustine in New York, and Simon Lee in London. This pretty much means nearly everyone in town is familiar with the work and in particular, the blur paintings on display (he said these will be the last of the series).

The range of hypnotic hues was expanded, more so than in the past, which created a steadily intensifying narcotic effect. If going to this show after too many gin gimlets in the Kulm Hotel across the street from the gallery, view at your own risk.

I liked the works in blues and greens in addition to the black and white combinations he's previously explored. He's an American Albert Oehlen with the interweaving of digital imagery applied employing his brush wielding digits. The works were punchily priced between \$200,00 and \$350,000, with several said to have been sold. Elrod's auction record, for a blur painting sold at Christie's London in 2015, is \$343,607.

Back in 2004, Elrod's work entitled Fallout was priced at \$14,000 and Christopher Wool's P432 and P436 were \$70,000 and \$75,000 respectively, none of which sold at the time. The record today for a comparable abstraction by Wool is about \$4m, Go and find another sector with similar such performance.