



Orgy in the Raw

Le Tableau, Curated by Joe Fyfe, at Cheim & Read Gallery, New York

By **DAVID COHEN** | June 28, 2010

Joe Fyfe, a painter known for his stark, almost belligerently informal abstraction, is also a critic and curator. In “Le Tableau,” a geographically and historically wide-angled summer group exhibition at Chelsea’s Cheim & Read Gallery that he has organized, Mr. Fyfe pugnaciously shakes by its horns the francophobia of the American critical establishment. The show pairs contemporary practitioners from both sides of the pond known for their almost semiotic interrogations of a painting’s support with 1950s and ‘60s “tachistes,” as the French liked to call their abstract expressionists: Jean Fautrier, Hans Hartung, the Canadian Jean-Paul Riopelle, and that quietly lyrical genius of sumptuous tones, the Russian-born Serge Poliakoff. These guys were big names at the time. But while they continue to command a loyal collector base in France, where they are often found in the concluding room of regional fine art museums, they are completely marginal to the official history of post war art promoted in the United States. Such “old masters” rub shoulders with Paris-friendly yanks such as Joan Mitchell, who resided in the city of lights for much of her time, and Milton Resnick. The result of Mr. Fyfe’s revisionist experiment is, quite apart from its critical or historical validity, both a tactile and a visual orgy of raw textures, smeared impastos, and punctured supports.