

Art in America

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Mark Sheinkman: *Bruckner* (left) and *Concourse* (right), both 2007, oil, alkyd and graphite on linen; at Von Lintel.

Mark Sheinkman at Von Lintel

Mark Sheinkman has been mining the richness of graphite and the permutations of line since the early 1990s, in works that run the gamut from 30-foot-long drawings to three-dimensional wall works of rolled canvas or paper, some more successful than others. His 2006 show at Von Lintel consisted of dense linear compositions akin to Brice Marden's meandering lines or Pollock's skeins of swirling drips and pours, minus the texture. Sheinkman also works in color, producing vivid abstractions in oil and alkyd on varying sizes of paper or canvas, from wandering lines to rigid rectilinear or plaidlike compositions. But those works, skillful and pleasing though they are, tend to have a more generic quality, whereas the graphite pieces are all his.

Named for streets in the Bronx, where Sheinkman's studio is located, the paintings in this show—all 2007 and ranging from 3 to 15 feet on a side—share a vocabulary with his earlier work, though the forms in

this group seem to have broken free. Large expanses of heavily applied graphite give the surface a rich luster through which ghostly ribbons of white twist and undulate as if floating in space or deep waters. Instead of crisp lines on a flat plane, these appear multidimensional. Hard white edges in the foreground recede to wispy translucency, as if deeper layers were revealed by X-ray.

To create these works, essentially erased drawings, Sheinkman coats the surfaces—all but one linen—with a white ground of oil and alkyd, on which he applies powdered graphite using brushes and rags. As if drawing in reverse, he then removes the graphite in sweeping, curving lines. In its removal of material, his process is somewhat sculptural in nature, even as its results are more like photographs in appearance. Similar to David Reed's sanded-down, oddly gestureless brushstrokes, these works are deceptively devoid of the artist's hand, aside from the implied movement of his arm across the surface.

Rider looks like a chain of smoke rings billowing across the velvety black surface. *Intervale*, with its atypical angular thrusts, is suggestive of the diminishing white trails cut through a blue sky by a jet plane. Spanning three large panels, the approximately 14½-foot-wide *Concourse* dominated the main gallery with its expanse of darkness. Despite the work's imposing scale, the ribbon forms are more delicate and restrained here, softly billowing to the left and settling toward the bottom. Whereas *Concourse* presents a contemplative emptiness, *Sheridan* and *Morris* have energetic, tangled masses of curving lines arcing across their surfaces, though with less urgency than in some of his earlier works. These softer forms, seemingly adrift, no longer scramble to fill space or boldly dissect it. They calmly and elegantly command it with a quiet assurance.

—Stephanie Cash