

ARTnews

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Pard Morrison LewAllen Contemporary

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Offering a fitting visual elegy to Donald Judd and Agnes Martin, Pard Morrison borrowed from each of their sensibilities to advance the Minimalist esthetic.

Morrison refers to Judd in form, constructions, and surface treatment: the exhibition includes aluminum, ranging from shallow, wall-hung boxes to eight-foot-high rectilinear columns. They are precisely manufactured and painted, each layer of pigment baked to create a uniform surface.

The artist pays homage to Martin, whom he assisted in the last years of her life, by painting most of these structures with horizontal stripes, often in colors taken directly from her pastel palette. Particularly Martinesque are the large aluminum "canvases" in the 60-inch-square format she used almost exclusively in her final years of production.

The success of such works as *Quietness* (2007), a meditation in gray with nine half-inch horizontal bands of pale blue, depends on astute technical choices. By allowing his undercoat strokes to be faintly revealed, Morrison introduced much-needed imperfection and a painterly effect that he avoided elsewhere. The symmetry of *The Quiet Center of Life* (2007), a stack of four rectangles in flat gray with one sky blue box sandwiched in the middle, is extremely appealing.

In several pieces, the artist combined vivid hues with pale ones, producing eye-catching contrasts. *Softness* (2007), a rectangle of five equally sized squares of color, makes its point by juxtaposing white, tan, gray, and sky blue with shockingly bright highway yellow.

