

**MARY BUCCI MCCOY: TRACE**

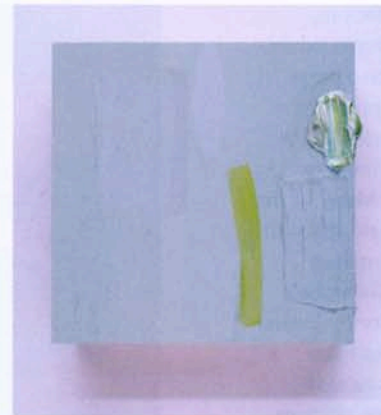
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This small exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Mary Bucci McCoy offers an intimate engagement with works that are deceptively modest in their size and apparent lack of painting complexity. Bucci McCoy is becoming an increasingly important intellectual and artistic presence in Boston, which is appropriate for an artist who sees painting as “a multivalent site for connection, interaction, and relationship.”

*Trace*, a small square thick panel painting is, like the other works in the exhibition, a material manifestation of transition and alteration. Working within a muted palette of gray green, lime green, and white and a range of paint textures that include flat/dry and thick/wet, Bucci McCoy lays down paint in a cool narrative of layered events. The left side of the aptly titled *Trace* looks as though it might have been painted years ago and has nearly disappeared into the gray green airy space of the panel. Toward the right, the painting exhales a soft breath while a lumped hunk of “being painted now” grips the edge of the panel.

It is tempting to understand this work as pared down, yet that sense of abstract reduction misses the succulence of the materiality the artist cultivates. Bucci McCoy’s recent work has been exploring a floating world of colored impulses, of receding and advancing visual signs of life. A gesture reveals intention, touches down and often disappears. The painting suggests the contradictory “appearance” of wind and the feel of adherence.

The slightly larger *Verge* (these are square panels about the size of old Bibles) shares the right-to-left structure of *Trace*, the convention perhaps of writing, and employs an even greater sense of disappearance. The overall



Mary Bucci McCoy, *Trace*, 2010, acrylic on plywood panel, 8 x 8 x 3/4". Photo courtesy the artist.

gray pitch of the painting seems obligingly neutral but in fact swallows the resident painted elements of the surface just enough to assert their lingering role as evidence—an aesthetic and scientific partnering.

The works on paper allow for an easier access to ephemeral mood shifting. They are thinner, more specifically translucent, more ghostly. The small format of the panels and the papers, the simple marks that all seem to come down

from a top stroke, and the subdued tonality all contribute to a sense of painting as a mutual territory of exchange. These are not heroic works; they are not ego paintings. When viewing them, one will quite possibly feel a shared history of experience—a recognition of private yet familiar space.

—David Raymond