

Time Out

Chicago

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ART & DESIGN

Suzanne Caporael: "Time"
Richard Gray Gallery, through May

475 (small hours), 2005

Misty, oil-painted memories dominate Suzanne Caporael's 17 recent works at Richard Gray Gallery. The New York artist's economical arrangements of color blocks on linen suggest highways, crowds, squalling babies and other elements of daily life, blurred and refracted by time.

Caporael's best pieces include *488 (in haste)*, in which she conjures an entire phalanx of runners from bits of blue, gray, brown and gold on a colorless background. Like her other paintings, it warrants close examination, revealing a fascinating contrast between the flat, nearly naked surface of the canvas and the thick, textured dabs of paint. The work *474 (big store)* peeks inside a bustling building surrounded by skyscrapers in a solarized cityscape more soft than gritty. Smudges

of orange and white resolve into a cranky infant in *495 (my other sister)*, a portrait so realistic that you can almost hear the shrieks.

A few paintings explore space divided by time, i.e., speed. In the idyllic *506 (Lewis and Clark)*, a car travels down a winding silvery road past blue-green mountains. A few horizontal bands in the largely empty *502 (1/2 hr. from here)* evoke another vehicle about to accelerate out of frame. The jaunty red office chair depicted in *504 (there and back)* seems to zip through its featureless gray surroundings of its own accord.

Some of Caporael's pieces are frustrating, with messy patches of color that are difficult to read. But most of her new work suggests that even mundane moments, once properly pixelated, can be alchemized into art.—LW

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