

Art in America

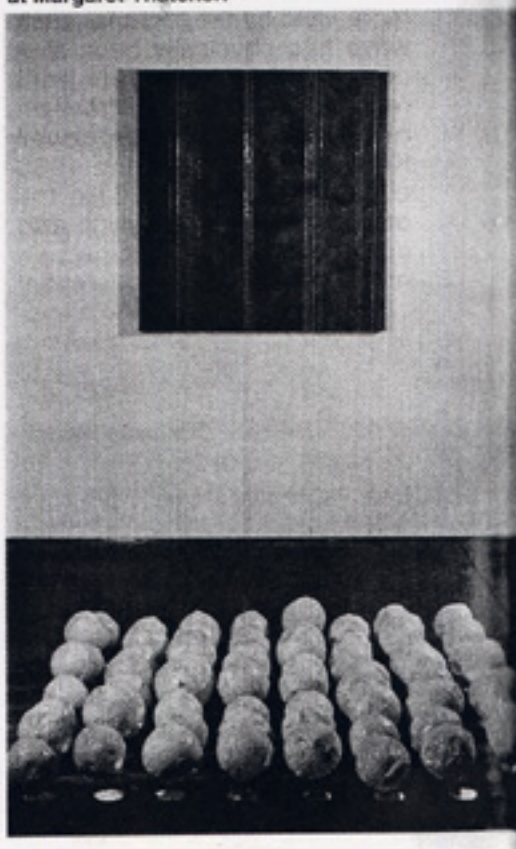
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Fran Siegel at Margaret Thatcher

"Interference," Fran Siegel's recent exhibition at Margaret Thatcher Projects, comprised seven almost square, medium-sized paintings and one installation. One hesitates to characterize the former as pictures, for they are constructed of steel mesh and Plexiglas, and bear little paint. However, these works are all wall-bound, and their two principal surfaces are arranged perfectly parallel to the picture plane.

The front of each object consists of a thin sheet of mesh, stretched approximately 2 inches in front of a sheet of colored Plexiglas that is unevenly spray-painted with an evanescent gray. The Plexiglas is mounted on a wooden frame, so that light can pour through and bounce off the wall. The mesh, drilled hundreds of times to make variously sized apertures, wraps around all four sides, thereby creating a shallow box. Clusters of holes form meandering patterns through which we see the colored Plexiglas, lying in seemingly immeasurable space. Spatial ambiguity is heightened by areas on the mesh sprayed with a hue matching that of the Plexiglas. *Interference 06* (2000), for instance, has waves of tiny holes weaving their way downward around smaller blank spaces. The untouched, light

Fran Siegel: Installation view of "Interference," 2001; at Margaret Thatcher.



gray areas of mesh alternate with tiny circles of glowing dark blue that are linked in some places by downward flowing streaks of white paint, and in others by undulating horizontal lines of diluted black paint.

The installation piece, *Untitled (64 Balls)*, consisted of small hollow spheres made of rice paper suspended from the ceiling by nylon threads and hovering just above the floor. The balls were arranged in eight rows of eight elements each, thereby defining a beige square that trembled in space in response to shifting air currents. Sixty-four small disk-shaped mirrors on the floor beneath the balls reflected their painted undersides. Smaller reflective disks were attached to the ceiling above the balls. Siegel is interested in the space sandwiched between these two mirroring poles. She calls the objects that lie within this realm and capture subtle variances in ambience "interferences."

Siegel is concerned with transitory effects of light, air and color. Her glowing pictures sparkle with life before a mobile viewer. This artist's project consists in rendering the immaterial visible, in splendid situations that are engineered through mostly sculptural means.

—Michaél Amy